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This fourth book in the Urban Language Series is concerned with the relationship of language to reading. Literacy must be based on the language the child actually uses. In the case of ghetto children, materials in their dialect must be prepared so that their task of associating sounds and words with written symbols is not complicated by lack of correspondence between these sounds and words and the students' normal speech. These materials must include forms the child uses and hears, and exclude forms he does not hear and use. They must avoid complex constructions and ambiguity and make use of natural redundancy. Further, they must use language appropriate to the context in the experience of the child. Examples of the kinds of materials that can be developed are included in two of the articles. Authors of the various papers (written between 1964 and 1968) are Joan Baratz, Ralph Fasold, Kenneth Goodman, William Labov, Raven McDavid, Roger Shuy, William Stewart, and Walter Wolfram. (MK)

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TEACHING BLACK CHILDREN TO READ

EDITED BY

JOAN C. BARATZ & ROGER W. SHUY

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TEACHING BLACK CHILDREN TO READ
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INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

The Urban Language Series is intended to make available the results of recent sociolinguistic research concerned with the position and role of language in a large metropolitan area. The series includes descriptions of certain aspects of urban language, particularly English, as well as theoretical considerations relevant to such descriptions. The series also includes studies dealing with fieldwork techniques, matters of pedagogy and relationships of urban language study to other disciplines. Where appropriate and feasible, accompanying tape recordings will be made available. Specifically excluded from consideration are aspects of English as a second language or second language learning in general.

It is hoped that the Urban Language Series will prove useful to several different kinds of readers. For the linguist, the series will provide data for the study of language performance and for the development of linguistic theory. Historically, linguists have formulated theory from individual rather than group performance. They have had to generalize about what constitutes "standard" or "non-standard" from intuitive judgments or from very limited data. This series is designed to make available large portions of language data as well as analyses in order to broaden the knowledge from which linguistic generalizations may come.

For the sociologist the series will provide access to the nature of social stratification by means of language. It is the contention of some scholars that a person's use of language is one of the most important cues to his social status, age, race or sex.

For the educator, the series will offer among other things a description of the very things which are most crucial to the classroom—the linguistic correlates which separate the accepted from the unaccepted.

Although the value of focussed attention on the special problems of urban language has been recognized for some time, relatively few substantial studies have been published. To a certain degree, this series represents a pioneering venture on the part of the Center for Applied Linguistics.

Roger W. Shuy
Director, Sociolinguistics Program
Center for Applied Linguistics

TEACHING BLACK CHILDREN TO READ

PREFACE

Reports from city after city with substantial numbers of economically deprived black children have indicated that reading achievement for this group is well below the national norms. In general, the reading failure of these children has been viewed as one requiring remediation, i.e. a deficit model has been employed which implies that there is something wrong with the child that has prevented him from learning to read. This something is most often presumed to have a neurophysiological base (e.g. dyslexia) or to be related to environmental factors that are presumed to be detrimental to the acquisition of reading skills (e.g. no books in the home).

The present volume is also concerned with the failure of black children in our public schools. It is, however, not concerned with remediation; rather, its focus is on literacy. The primary concern of the papers in this collection is that of language and the relationship of language to reading. Not remediation but how to teach reading is the issue here.

Although each author suggests different ways of handling certain aspects of the child's speech in teaching reading, all the papers in this volume recognize and deal with the role of the child's own language behavior in the process of learning to read.

These papers were written over approximately a four-year time span. They were developed in most cases independently, although some drew on the insights of the earlier papers.

Several of the articles were written specifically for this volume while others are reprinted from various journals.

McDavid states in his paper the fundamental proposition that "a reading program in any language, at any stage in a student's career, is likely to be effective in proportion to its use of the language habits that the student has acquired in speaking." His focus is on phoneme-grapheme relationships, particularly as they conflict across regional dialects.

Goodman also takes as basic to any reading program the premise that "literacy is built on the base of the child's existing language." He focuses on dialect differences that can impede learning to read, and suggests possible solutions which might avoid these barriers.

Labov discusses the difficulties in teaching black children to read arising from the "ignorance of standard English rules on the part of speakers of non-standard English" and from the "ignorance of non-standard English rules on the part of teachers and text writers." His discussion of sources of reading problems for non-standard speakers deals mainly with differences in phonology between standard and Negro non-standard English.

Baratz takes as a basic premise that the reading problem in the United States in regard to the black population is no different from literacy problems of emergent nations around the world. She feels that the child's different syntactic structures must be incorporated into the teaching procedures. A difference model, rather than a deficit model, is proposed for teaching black children to read.

Shuy also focuses on differences in the child's language system as a basis for suggested developments of beginning reading materials. He provides a possible linguistic rationale for consideration in the construction of such materials.

Fasold's paper deals with some of the problems of orthographic presentation of dialect materials to children. A systematic framework for the use of standard orthography in dialect texts is presented.

The Wolfram and Fasold paper is an attempt to illustrate some practical applications of the theoretical considerations of several of the preceding articles.

In the final paper, Stewart, who for some time now has been a staunch advocate of dialect-based texts, also focuses sharply on the child's different language system. He discusses the nature of the child's reading problem with particular emphasis on language interference as a prime source for the child's failure in school. While he calls for the use of dialect materials, Stewart elaborates on some of the difficulties inherent in constructing and programming such materials.

During the four-year time span of these papers there have been changes in the rhetoric concerning the American Negro. In McDavid's paper (1964), and even more so in Goodman's paper (1965), although some of the dialect speakers that are being described are clearly Negroes, no reference to race is made--the black man was still "the invisible man". Finally, however, the overt identification is made: Labov (1966-67) addresses himself to describing reading problems of Negro children, while in 1968, Baratz, Fasold, Shuy, and Wolfram use such terms as black, Negro inner-city, ghetto dwellers, and Afro-American synonymously.

J.C.B.
R.W.S.

Washington, D.C.
January 1969

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DIALECTOLOGY AND THE TEACHING OF READING

by Raven I. McDavid, Jr.

Dialect associations of phonemes and graphemes may vary strikingly from one part of the culture to another. English patterns of phonemic-graphemic correspondences involve several layers of cultural convention, and some of the practices of some subcultural subdialects may be sharply at variance with the normal practices of a speaker. These complexities of association make it difficult for someone not only to spell a word he normally confines to the spoken informal style, but to pronounce a word which he is accustomed to meeting only in print. And if words of the last group are frequently mispronounced in oral reading, there is a reasonable supposition that they will be as frequently misapprehended in silent reading. This supposition, like many others, needs to be tested, but pending disproof, I shall continue to assert it.

More important than this, and amusing examples that may be drawn from anyone's recollections,[1] is the basic problem: to what extent do dialect differences in American English complicate the task of teaching in American schools the reading of matter written or printed in English? I shall here use _reading_ in its widest sense, to include not only simple

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literacy but the skill—the art, in fact—of understanding materials of increasing complication, whether scientific or aesthetic in their essential bent.

Here we have to ask ourselves a few questions, some of which, like desperate Pilates, we cannot expect to have adequately answered in this life: (1) What is the process of learning to read, in linguistic and sociolinguistic terms? (2) What is the general dialectal situation in American Englist? (4) How does this situation affect the problem of the classroom teacher, as a teacher of reading? (5) How much do we know about various kinds of dialect differences in American English? How much more can we hope to know? (6) How do these differences, as we know them, affect the problem of the classroom teacher of reading in the American dialectal situation?

What is the process of learning to read, in linguistic and sociolinguistic terms? On this question I gladly yield to the greater _expertise_ of the professionals. There are many forces converging to a point when a teacher guides a student into the ability to understand the graphic representation of the language the student can already manipulate orally and understand aurally. But even here a few propositions can be restated:

A reading program, in any language, at any stage in a student's career, is likely to be effective in proportion to its use of the language habits that the student has acquired in speaking.

All children by the age of six use extremely complicated syntactic patterns; furthermore, children's vocabularies are frequently underestimated, rarely overestimated.

Our culture demands a high degree of reading skill of anyone who hopes to participate adequately in its benefits; but conversely, more than any other culture ever known, it provides frequent opportunities for children to develop at an early age associations between the language and its graphic representation. It is an ironic fact that the culturally most deprived groups actually make the greatest use of the entertainment medium that provides the greatest opportunities for developing these associations—television.

All instructional programs which are concerned with developing skills might learn from the intensive language programs of World War II and develop drill materials based on functional situations and substitutions in patterns. Admittedly limited in my knowledge of the subculture of professional teaching of reading, I find none of the so-called basal readers that has yet done this.

What is dialectology? Dialectology is the study of language differences within a speech community, with a *dialect* simply defined as a variety of a language, generally mutually intelligible with other varieties of that language, but set off from them by a unique complex of features of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Dialect, thus used, is not a derogatory term but a descriptive one; it is equally applicable to the Gullah of Edisto Island (locally /'edisto 'ɔilənt/) and to the quaint and curious subspecies of cultivated Eastern New England speech employed by the Senators from Massachusetts. These differences are often apprehended intuitively or informally, but they can always be classified objectively provided comparable data have been elicited. The methods of eliciting such data and the techniques of classification have been described on many occasions: the handbooks of the linguistic atlases of Italy and of New England present rather detailed accounts of methods and procedures.

What is the general dialectal situation in American English? Dialects in American English are less sharply set off from each other than those in British English or in any of the better known languages of Western Europe. With few exceptions, an American from one region can understand one from another region without difficulty. The more recently a part of the country has been settled, the less sharp are the dialect differences; in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states there are no differences as great as those between Boston, New York, and Albany.

Second, there is no single regional variety of speech that has established itself as prestigious, and therefore to be imitated more than all others. In Italy the educated speech of Florence has been preferred since the fourteenth century; in France, the Francian of Paris; in England, the upper-class speech of London, now half embalmed in the guise of Received Pronunciation (RP). But in the United States the educated speech of Boston, New York, Atlanta, Chicago, San Francisco or Seattle stands on a par with that of Richmond or Charleston or St. Louis or any other cultural center. The time is largely past when a teacher attempts to impose on his students a dialect from another region.

Third, there is extreme mobility, both regional and social, epitomized by the fact that the great-grandson of an Irish common laborer was our last president, and was succeeded by the son of a southern marginal farmer. The son of an Italian immigrant has been secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, and the rolls of Congress are studded with those whose ancestors were the humblest of people, who rose by their own merits. And the records of internal migration are at least as complex, as any linguistic geographer can tell us. The movements of Daniel Boone from Virginia to North Carolina to Kentucky and finally to Missouri typify the search of Americans for new frontiers, physical or economic. The migrations of children of servicemen or Methodist ministers have always been proverbial; today the children of corporation executives and junior executives are also likely to change schools every few years. And teachers themselves, from all over the nation, are drawn westward by California gold, or to the large metropolitan areas by higher salaries and pensions and better working conditions. The typical kindergarten or first grade classroom today is likely to show a wide range of regional or social dialects, or both.

How does the dialectal situation affect the teacher of reading? This dialectal situation means that the teacher must accept a multi-valued conception of standard English, with a consequent variety of phonemic-graphemic associations. He must also be ready to face the problem of introducing to reading materials in the standard language children for whom standard English is an alien idiom and the dominant culture an unknown culture.

How much do we know about various kinds of dialect differences? Fortunately, we have at our disposal a large body of evidence on regional and social differences within American English. Such broad-gauge studies as the Linguistic Atlas project are largely unpublished as yet, but several significant derivative books and monographs and a spate of articles have appeared. Other more specialized studies, such as C.K. Thomas's investigations of the low-back vowels before /-r-/, have given valuable information on particular problems. Several specific communities have been investigated, with emphasis on social differences in dialect; especially notable is the study of New York's Lower East Side by William Labov, and that of Metropolitan Chicago by Lee Pederson. Viewed in terms of linguistic phenomena, we have the following kinds of information:

1. A delineation of most of the significant dialect areas east of the Mississippi, and of those in several states farther westward.

2. As far as segmental phonemes are concerned, rather detailed information on differences in the phonemic systems of these dialects, on the incidence of the phonemes in particular words, and on the phonetic qualities of the phonemes.

3. Rather good sampling of variations in verb forms; less adequate sampling of other matters of inflection and of most matters of syntax.

4. Rather detailed information on representative selections of the folk vocabulary of older America, particularly of the folk vocabulary of rural areas; less adequate information about regional and social differences in the lexicon of more recent aspects of culture, especially of the characteristic vocabulary of urban areas. Enough information, in any case, to permit tentative generalizations about the regional differences in culture, somewhat more accurate than the impressionistic feelings we all have. Certainly enough to realize the complexity of urban culture, where chitterlings and bagels may be sold in the same store, and the daughter of two white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (*wasps*, familiarly) may come home from kindergarten talking of dreidels.

5. Very little about regional or social variation in the suprasegmentals: stress, intonation, transitions, and terminals. Almost all the evidence on such variations is to be found in nontechnical observations, such as Mencken's summary of the intonation patterns of English in the Pennsylvania German areas. Exceptions to this generality are a few pages in Pike's *Intonation of American English* (1942) and such incidental comments that in such words as *nonsense* Sledd and I, like many Middle Westerners, have the sequence /ʹ + ^/, but the phonetic qualities of our stress phonemes are such that to Middle Westerners like Joos we seem to be saying /ʹ | ʹ/. The whole range of regional and social variation in these complex phenomena needs detailed investigation.

The same observation can be made about the dialectology of paralanguage and kinesics; again, as with the dialectology of the suprasegmentals, there has been no systematic research, but a number of shrewd intuitive guesses. For these fields, as with the suprasegmentals, we can all concede that the phenomena have only recently been considered systematically structured as a part of human communication, so that the techniques of dialectal investigation would take some time to develop. However, our objective appreciation of the delay in no way mitigates the urgency of the investigation, nor lessens our appreciation of such pioneering work as has been conducted by Basil Bernstein at the University of London or by Rufus Baehr at the University of Chicago, limited as their conclusions may be.

6. Again, there is little systematic evidence available about regional and social differences in children's speech, or differences in the speech of equivalent social groups in the same region but residing in cities, suburbs, small towns, and rural communities. This in no way detracts from the value of Miss Strickland's magnificent study, or of the Loban study at California, or of the work just beginning on the Chicago South Side. It simply recognizes the need to learn far more than we have yet learned.

How do these differences affect the teacher of reading? The implications of this current state of our knowledge of American dialects for the practical work of teaching reading will demand the cooperation of several kinds of scholars and the devotion of skilled teachers. What follows represents the thinking of one person who feels that it is important to put the resources of dialectology, regional and social, at the service of society, and who is willing both to offer his mite and to listen to suggestions as to how that mite can be most profitably invested. Some observations follow.

Whatever the disadvantages of our current system of writing down English, we are not likely to find a better one generally adopted. We must assume that students in our schools are going to have to use the conventional English alphabet when they read. While we should not discourage the experimental use of such devices as the Pitman Augmented Alphabet, we must remember that they are strictly interim devices, and their use must allow for a systematic phasing out, and the mastering of the conventional system. Furthermore, any such interim device must be tested in terms of its adequacy in representing the units of the sound system that contrast in the various standard dialects of American English.

The regional differences in children's speech are probably diminishing, though undoubtedly there are differences in experience that might be considered in any program. On the other side of the coin, however, television now brings a wide assortment of vicarious experiences to most children in most areas; one might think in terms of a reading program that would enable the children to investigate more widely on their own the worlds of Robin Hood, the cowboys, the spacemen—or the wide range of materials offered by Garfield Goose—when the television is being repaired or repossessed.

Social differences present a more complicated problem. Under the older demographic pattern, most phonological and lexical details were shared throughout a community, and the social differences were largely matters of grammar—differences in particular morphological or syntactic features (e.g., seed vs. saw, all to once vs. all at once). It was assumed that newer immigrant groups would have peculiarities of speech, but that assimilation to the normal patterns of their communities would gradually take place; and by and large this expectation has been fulfilled, as one may observe from listening to any presidential news conference. However, in recent years the prevailing pattern in American cities has been altered to something once restricted to the rural areas of the Southeast, and what had been the ideal of a humanistically oriented plantation culture modeling itself on its interpretations of the classical societies is now fulfilled as the nightmare of a technologically determined urban and suburban civilization, where a high degree of literacy is essential for any true participation in the benefits of society. The mudsill of happy slaves on which Southern apologists erected their myth of an Aristotelian-ordered society has now become a frustrated and properly resentful, low skilled and often unemployable proletariat, potentially threatening the stability of urban society. Set off by skin color, by ignorance of the values of the dominant culture, and by a dialectal cleavage which contrasts the pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary of southeastern folk-speech and North Central common and cultivated speech, they find integrated schools, fair employment, and open occupancy a cruel mockery, as working-class whites, themselves anthropologically unsophisticated, join the *sauve qui peut* in search of a suburban haven.

The usual teacher, compulsively in pursuit of middle-class norms, has no conception of the environment of deprivation, exploitation, frustration, and violence in which the lower-class urban Negroes live. The normal curiosity of children about the world is inhibited by properly fearful parents; absence of mothers means the lack of anyone for the children to talk to; books are nonexistent; and in a cacophonous world the television—potentially a powerful instrument for acculturation—becomes just another source of background noise.

The educational advancement of this new urban group—which means basically the improvement of their ability to read—constitutes the greatest challenge to American education. It is likely that teaching some form of standard English as a second language will be necessary; and it might be easier to start this second language in the kindergartens or earlier, and use this as the vehicle of reading, and hence of introduction to the values of the dominant culture.

Paralanguage and kinesics are largely cued into reading materials by lexical devices, e.g., such verbs as *sauntered*, *gesticulated*, *simpered*, and *whined*. Some of this comes into oral reading in the early grades; relating to it is important for silent reading in the advanced grades and in college, to say nothing of later life. Whether these cues can be grasped informally—as is the usual procedure today—or should be formally indicated is something that needs exploration. Where regional and social differences occur, some accounting may be necessary, but we need to discover those differences first.

Suprasegmentals, like segmentals, are not adequately represented by the conventional writing system, but have been conventionalized over some four centuries by generations of editors and printers. Where regional and social differences occur—especially in the same classroom—so that the same gross phonetics may signal different meanings or different gross phonetics signal the same meaning, one may hope that the future teachers will be sophisticated enough to recognize what is going on and to explain the differences to the student (and one is unrealistic if he thinks that children in the early grades cannot detect such differences and wonder about them). In most cases, it is unlikely that there will be serious differences in the positions of the terminals (Trager and Smith's single-bar, double-bar, double-cross), and there seems to be no reason for failing to order line-breaks in elementary reading materials according to the positions of the terminals. (This, I am told by some experienced teachers of reading, is frowned upon, as interfering with the development of a wide eye-span; but what profiteth a man to span whole lines at a glance and miss the structural cues to meaning? It would seem that there is really no basic conflict, but only a question of ordering materials.)

The problems of general differences in the regional and social vocabularies have been approached in the analysis of the potential regional and social differences in children's speech. But there will always be a problem of relating visual signal and speech signal in words that are associated primarily with either the spoken or the written side of the language. A legendary episode in my childhood concerns a time in 1914 when I brought in the evening paper and remarked from the headline "/ǰépən/ (Japan) enters the war" (less heinous in my community perhaps than elsewhere, since a local tobacconist was named Gapen /gépən/). And I still recall my first attempts to render *negotiations* and *cooperate* (respectively /nɨ́gətèšənz/ and /kʊ́pərèt/, or a rather good second-grader's /vɛ́ləkəsi/ and /mǽŋgi/ for *velocity* and *mangy*. Conversely, familiar childhood words like *fice* or *rinktums* or *larrows* (to pull a few out of my own recollection) may lack an established orthographic form altogether. Because a dialect is associated with some kind of subculture, there may be differences in the most feasible words to introduce in a given set of reading materials.

In the early grades, it would seem that the grammatical problems, generally social rather than regional, can be handled as matters of selection, careful allocation to context, and pattern drill. The forms *saw* and *seen* are both a part of the language experience of every American child; the problem is to make sure that he regularly selects the forms *I saw* and *I have seen*. This of course may be related to the problem of teaching the standard usage as a second language, and of associating all reading materials with this usage. Problems like associating the /-s, -z, -əz/ allomorphs with the third singular present indicative, where the home dialect has /∅/, must certainly be handled in this fashion.

Perhaps the most important—and certainly the most clearly systematized—impact of dialectology on the teaching of reading will come in the area of phonemic-graphemic associations in the segmentals. (Several scholars, notably Charles F. Hockett of Cornell, are investigating the relative frequency of certain kinds of phonemic-graphic associations.)

There are two problems to be considered: (1) structural differences, presence or absence of such contrasts as *do/dew*, *cot/caught*, *morning/mourning*, *have/halve*; (2) differences in the incidence of phonemes, as found in the variant pronunciations of *coop*, *on*, *fog*. These must be related to the necessity of introducing at the earliest possible moment such forms as *a*, *the*, and the like, the desirability of proceeding from grosser to finer graphic distinctions, and the distribution of the learning load so that too many sound-symbol associations are not thrust upon the student at once. (Leonard Bloomfield, C.C. Fries, and other linguists have recognized the importance of getting into the program, as early as possible, the high-frequency function words.) And somehow, not too late, the student must be conditioned to the morphographic side of the English orthographical system, so that he can associate *history* and *historical* and so on.

A complex dialectal problem develops when there is another language in use at home, whether Acadian French, Milwaukee German, Yiddish, or Puerto Rican Spanish. This is often further complicated when the students or the parents first encounter English as a nonstandard type. However, these are best treated here as differences in degree and not in kind.

A student of dialectology is not, *per se*, an authority on all problems of reading, or necessarily on any of them. His role is, rather, that of a consultant, to collaborate with the others involved in this most important problem in American education—to be a devil's advocate if necessary—by attempting to anticipate some of the problems teachers and students may have in using materials in a different cultural situation from that for which they were originally designed.

NOTES

1. Humorous anecdotes can be documented from such sources as, for example, Mayor Collins of Boston who, on meeting the aristocratic Senator Hoare at a social gathering, asked, "And how is Mrs. W.?"

DIALECT BARRIERS TO READING COMPREHENSION

by Kenneth S. Goodman

The task of learning to read is not an easy one. But it's a lot easier to learn to read one's mother tongue than to learn to read a foreign language, one which the learner does not speak. Actually each of us speaks a particular dialect of a language. Each dialect is distinguished from all other dialects by certain features as: some of its sounds, some of its grammar, some of its vocabulary. The dialect which the child learns in the intimacy of his own home is his mother tongue. All physically normal children learn to speak a dialect. Whatever happens to his language during his life, however fluent and multilingual he may become, this native dialect is his most deeply and permanently rooted means of communication.

Since it is true that learning to read a foreign language is a more difficult task than learning to read a native language, it must follow that it is harder for a child to learn to read a dialect which is not his own than to learn to read his own dialect.

This leads to an important hypothesis: The more divergence there is between the dialect of the learner and the

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First read as a paper at the meeting of the International Reading Association in Detroit, Michigan, May 6, 1965, this article is here reprinted by permission from Elementary English 42:8.853-60 (December 1965).

dialect of learning, the more difficult will be the task of learning to read.

This is a general hypothesis. It applies to all learners. If the language of the reading materials or the language of the teacher differs to any degree from the native speech of the learners some reading difficulty will result. To some extent also there is divergence between the immature speech of the young learner and adult language norms in the speech community. Children have mastered most but not all of the sounds and syntax of adult speech. A further divergence reflects the fact that older members of any language community are less influenced by language change than are the youth. Thus the teacher may cling to language which is obsolescent in form or meaning. Books particularly lag behind language change since they freeze language at the date of composition. Though this paper is mainly concerned with gross dialect differences it must be remembered, then, that the reading problems discussed apply to some extent to all learners because minor dialect differences are features of even homogeneous speech communities.

The Divergent Speaker

For purposes of discussion we'll call the child who speaks a dialect different from that which the school, text, or teacher treats as standard, the divergent speaker. Divergence, of course, is relative and there is by no means agreement on what standard American English is. Divergent is a good term however, because it is neutral as a value term and it is important, perhaps critical, in considering the problems of the divergent speaker to avoid labeling his language as bad, sloppy, or sub-standard. We need to keep clear that, though some dialects may carry more social prestige than others, they are not necessarily more effective in communication. Gleason has said, "It is a safe generalization to say that all languages are approximately equally adequate for the needs of the culture of which they are a part." Dialects represent subcultures. Therefore it can similarly be said that all dialects are equally adequate for the needs of the subculture of which they are a part.

Every child brings to school, when he comes, five or six years of language and of experience. His language is closely intertwined with the culture of his community; it embodies the cultural values and structures the way in which he may perceive his world and communicate his reactions to others.

His language is so well learned and so deeply embossed on his subconscious that little conscious effort is involved for him in its use. It is as much a part of him as his skin. Ironically, well-meaning adults, including teachers who would never intentionally reject a child or any important characteristic of a child, such as the clothes he wears or the color of his skin, will immediately and emphatically reject his language. This hurts him far more than other kinds of rejection because it endangers the means which he depends on for communication and self-expression.

Things that other people say sound right or funny to a child depending on whether they fit within the language norms of his dialect. He has become exceedingly proficient in detecting slight, subtle differences in speech sounds which are significant in his dialect and he's learned to ignore other differences in speech sounds that are not significant. He uses rhythm and pitch patterns of his language with great subtlety. He enjoys puns on language which employ very slight variations in relative pitch and stress. By the time divergent speakers are in the middle grades they have learned to get pleasure from the fact that an in-group pun based on their common divergent dialect is unfunny to an outsider like their teacher who doesn't share the dialect.

All children develop vocabulary which falls generally within the vocabulary pool of their speech community. Through repeated experience common for their culture they have begun to develop complex concepts and express them in their mother tongue.

In every respect the process of language development of the divergent speaker is exactly the same as that of the standard speaker. His language when he enters school is just as systematic, just as grammatical within the norms of his dialect, just as much a part of him as any other child's is. Most important, it is a vital link with those important to him and to the world of men.

There are some differences between the problems of the divergent speaker in an isolated rural community where a single dialect is the common speech and has been for several generations and the problems of the divergent speaker in the center of one of our great cities. This latter child may live in a virtual ghetto, but his friends and neighbors represent a variety of language backgrounds. Transplanted regional dialects become social class dialects. As the city-dweller grows older he comes into increasing contact with the general culture and its language. In the home community the idiolects, the personal languages of individuals, will cluster closely around a dialect prototype. But the dialects of urban divergent speakers are much more varied and shade off from distinct divergent dialects to standard speech. Variables such as family origin, recency of migration, degree of isolation from influences outside the subculture, attitudes toward self, personal and parental goals are some of the factors which may determine idiolect.

Divergent Languages or Dialects

Language diversity among divergent speakers complicates the task of understanding the literacy problems which they have. The basic problems will be the same but the specific form and degree will vary among individuals.

Teachers need to give careful consideration to the separate characteristics of several kinds of language divergence. They need to first differentiate immature language from dialect-based divergence. Language which is immature is always in transition toward adult norms. Teachers need not worry too much about immaturity in language since desired change is virtually inevitable. On the other hand, whatever the teacher does to speed this change is in the direction the child is moving. He can confirm the teacher's advice in the speech of his parents. But if the teacher "corrects" the dialect-based divergent language, this is at cross purposes with the direction of growth of the child. All his past and present language experience contradicts what the teacher tells him. School becomes a place where people talk funny and teachers tell you things about your language that aren't true.

Another point that needs to be clarified is the difference between standard regional speech and some imaginary national standard which is correct everywhere and always. No dialect of American English ever has achieved this status; instead we have a series of standard regional dialects, the speech of the cultured people in each area.

It's obvious that a teacher in Atlanta, Georgia, is foolish to try to get her children to speak like cultured people in Detroit or Chicago, just as it's foolish for any teacher to impose universal standard pronunciations which are not even present in the teacher's own speech. I'm referring to such hypocrisies as insisting that u before e must always say its own name and therefore Tuesday is /tyuzdey/. Cultured speech, socially preferred, is not the same in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Miami, Baltimore, Atlanta, or Chicago. The problem, if any, comes when the

Bostonian moves to Chicago, the New Yorker to Los Angeles, the Atlantan to Detroit. Americans are ethnocentric in regard to most cultural traits but they are doubly so with regard to language. Anybody who doesn't speak the way I do is wrong. A green onion is not a scallion. I live in Detróit not Détroit. I can carry my books to work but not my friends. Fear ends with an r and Cuba does not. Such ethnocentrisms are unfortunate among the general public. They may be tragic among educators. Too often we send children off to speech correction classes not because their speech needs correction but because it isn't like ours. Pity the poor child who finds himself transplanted to a new and strange environment and then must handle the additional complication of learning to talk all over again. And, of course, if the child is a migrant from the rural South to the urban North, his speech marks him not only as different but socially inferior. He is told not just that he is wrong but sloppy, careless, vulgar, crude. His best defense is to be silent.

In his classroom the divergent speaker finds several kinds of language being used. First is the language or bundle of idiolects within dialects which he and his classmates bring with them as individuals. Represented in their language or dialect is the language or dialect of their parents and their speech community. Next there is the language of the teacher which will exist in at least two forms. There will be the teacher's informal, unguarded idiolect and his version of correct standard speech; the way he says things off guard; the way he strives to speak as a cultivated person. Another version of the standard language will be the literary form or forms the child encounters in books. To this we must add the artificial language of the basal reader. Artificial language is not used by anyone in any communicative situation. Some primerese is artificial to the point of being non-language, not even a divergent one.

The Consensus of Language and the Uniformity of Print

Two things are in the divergent child's favor. First, all speakers have a range of comprehension which extends beyond the limits of their own dialect. All of us can understand speech which differs from our own, particularly if we are in frequent contact with such speech. As they grow older, urban children are in increasing contact with a number of dialects other than their own. Secondly, the English orthography has one great virtue in its uniformity across dialects. No matter how words are pronounced, printers across the country usually spell them the same. Though we get some mavericks like *guilty* and *judgment*, we spell *pumpkin* the same whether we say *pəŋkin* or *pəmpkən* and *something* the same whether we say *səmpthin* or *səmpm*. This standardization of print for a multidialectal speech suggests that part of the problem of learning to read for divergent speakers could be eliminated if teachers let children read in their own dialects and if teachers got rid of the misconception that spelling determines pronunciation. One child asked his teacher how to spell /ræt/. "R-a-t," she said. "No, ma'am," he responded, "I don't mean rat mouse, I mean right now."

Points of Divergence Among Dialects

Now if we examine the areas in which dialects differ we can perhaps shed some light on the barriers divergent readers face. Let us start with sound.

SOUND DIVERGENCE

Intonation

Dialects differ in intonation. Perhaps what makes an unfamiliar dialect most difficult to understand is its unexpected pitch, stress, and rhythm. Teachers often complain when they first begin to work with divergent speakers that they can't understand a word. But after a short time they seem to tune in on the right frequency. They catch on to the melody of the dialect. Since intonation is essential in understanding oral language, it is logical to assume that it must be supplied mentally by readers as they read in order for comprehension to take place. How much comprehension is interfered with if the teacher insists on intonation patterns in oral reading which are unnatural to the divergent reader can only be conjectured at this time. But there is no doubt that this is a source of difficulty to some extent.

Phonemes

Phonemes are the significant units of speech sounds which are the symbols of oral language. All American dialects share more or less a common pool of phonemes. But not all dialects use all these phonemes in all the wame ways. They pattern differently in different dialects. Since phonemes are really bundles of related sounds rather than single sounds, it is likely that the range of sounds that compose a particular phoneme will vary among dialects. Vowel phonemes are particularly likely to vary. Even within dialects there are some variations. Good examples are words ending in -og, such as /dog/, /fog/, /frog/, /log/; or are they /dɔg/, /fɔg/, /frɔg/, /lɔg/? In my own idiolect I find I say /frɔg/, /fɔg/, /dɔg/, /lɔg/, but I also say /cag/, /bag/, /smag/.

Obviously, phonics programs which attempt to teach a relationship between letters and sounds cannot be universally applicable to all dialects. The basic premise of phonics instruction is that by teaching a child to associate the sounds which he hears in oral language with the letters in written language he will be able to sound out words. But a divergent speaker can't hear the sounds of standard speech in his nonstandard dialect because he does not have them or because they occur in different places in his dialect than other dialects. The instruction may be not only inappropriate but confusing. When he reads the lesson he may then be forced to sound out words which are not words in his dialect. To illustrate: Take a child who normally says /də/ rather than /ðə/ and /nəfin/ rather than /nəθin/. Teaching him that the digraph <th> represents the first sound in *the* and the medial consonant in *nothing* makes him pronounce words not in his dialect and throws a barrier across his progress in associating sound and print.

New Reading Materials and Sound Divergence Among Dialects

Recent attempts at producing beginning reading materials which have regular one-to-one correspondence between letters and phonemes will not solve this problem and may actually compound it since there will be a tendency for teachers to assume that the matched correspondence of sound and letter is to be uniform throughout the reading materials. For example, they might assume *frog* and *log* to have the same vowel sound and so teach the sounds to be the same when a student might well use /a/ as in *father* in one and /ɔ/ as in *caught* in the other. The matched phonemic-graphemic books assume that there is a uniform spoken set of sounds that can by ingenuity and counting of data be inscribed with a uniform written alphabet. This is not true, when the spoken language is viewed as a national-international phenomenon or when it is viewed as a local phenomenon in a heterogeneous cultural country as one of our urban centers.

Transcription of the sound language in ITA faces the same problems. It has a wider alphabet and can therefore transcribe more literary and sensible English than the limited lexicon of the American linguistic readers. The British ITA materials, however, cannot be read literally except with the "received pronunciation" of the BBC. When as an American I read about "levers" in an ITA book I must say /liyvərz/. The principle that spelling is the same across dialects is sacrificed and ITA spelling requires pronunciation narrowed to one special class dialect. Teachers using these materials need to make some adjustments for the dialects used by themselves and their students. There may be, no doubt is, a spoken language in common but it is not so uniform as is the common spelling system.

Another place where sound divergence among dialects affects the handling of reading materials is the traditional sets of homophones. Homophones, words that sound alike, will vary from dialect to dialect. Been and bin are homophones in my speech. In another dialect been would sound the same as bean and in still another Ben and been would be sounded alike. Bidialectal students may bring up new sets of homophones. One teacher asked her class to use so in a sentence. "I don't mean sew a dress", she said. "I mean the other so." "I got a so on my leg", responded one of her pupils.

GRAMMAR DIVERGENCE

The Suffix

Inflectional changes in words involve using suffixes or internal changes in words to change case or tense. In certain dialects of American English speakers say He see me rather than He sees me. They are not leaving off an s. There isn't any in their dialect. Similarly, plurals may not use an s form. I got three brother, is common in Appalachian speech. One teacher reported to me that her pupils could differentiate between crayon and crayons as written words and respond to the difference by selecting plural and singular illustrations, but they read the words the same, one crayon, two /kræyən/. The problem is not an inability to see or say the s. It doesn't seem to belong in the pronunciation of crayons. The inflectional ending s to indicate plural is not in the grammar of this dialect.

Most Americans will add /əz/ to form plurals of words ending in /s/ /z/ /š/ /ǰ/ /č/ as in *busses*, *mazes*, *washes*, *colleges*, *churches*, but in the Blue Ridge Mountains this ending also goes with words ending in /sp/, /st/, /sk/ as in /waspəz/ /pohstəz/ /tæskəz/ (H.A. Gleason, *An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, p. 62). This kind of difference will be reflected in the child's reading. The differences are systematic within the child's dialect. In terms of the school and teacher they may be divergent, or as we say, incorrect, but in terms of the reader and his speech community they are convergent, that is, correct.

No only suffixes vary, but also verb forms and verb auxiliaries. When a child says, "I here, teacher", as the teacher calls the roll, he is not being incomplete. No linking verb is needed in this type of utterance in his dialect. There is a difference in the syntax of his dialect and other American English dialects. Fortunately such differences are minor in American English. One area of difference seems to be the use of verb forms and verb markers. *We was going*, *They done it*, *We come home*, all are examples of this phenomenon.

Vocabulary Divergence

An area of dialect divergence that people are most aware of is vocabulary. Most people are aware that *gym shoes* in Detroit are *sneakers* in New York, that in Chicago you may *throw* but in Little Rock you *chunk*, that a Minnesota *lake* would be a *pond* in New Hampshire. Perhaps there is less awareness of words which have similar but not identical meanings in different dialects. All words have a range of meaning rather than a single meaning. This range may shift from place to place. The meaning of *carry* may be basically the same in two dialects but some uses will be correct in one dialect but not in the other.

Vocabulary differences among dialects may cause reading difficulty and must be compensated for by the teacher who uses texts printed for a national market.

I've dealt primarily here with the barriers to learning how to read that result when the readers have divergent languages. There are of course other important problems which grow out of the differences in experience, values, and general subculture of the divergent learners. Readers can't comprehend materials which are based on experience and concepts outside their background and beyond their present development.

The Reading Program for Divergent Speakers

Let's address ourselves to a final question. What is currently happening as the divergent speaker learns to read? I've found that divergent speakers have a surprising tendency to read in book dialect. In their oral reading they tend to use phonemes that are not the ones they use in oral language. Their reading often sounds even more wooden and unnatural than most beginners. There is some tendency to read their own dialect as they gain proficiency, but in general it appears that teachers are more successful in teaching preferred pronunciations than reading. What is lacking is the vital link between written and oral language that will make it possible for children to bring their power over the oral language to bear on comprehending written language.

There seem to be three basic alternatives that schools may take in literacy programs for divergent speakers. First is to write materials for them that are based on their own dialect, or rewrite standard materials in their dialect. A second alternative is to teach the children to speak the standard dialect before teaching them to read in the standard dialect. The third alternative is to let the children read the standard materials in their own dialect, that is, to accept the language of the learners and make it their medium of learning. The first alternative seems to be impractical on several counts. Primarily the opposition of the parents and the leaders in the speech community must be reckoned with. They would reject the use of special materials which are based on a non-prestigious dialect. They usually share the view of the general culture that their speech is not the speech of cultivation and literature. They want their children to move into the general culture though they are not sure how this can be brought about.

The second alternative is impractical on pedagogical grounds in that the time required to teach children who are not academically oriented to another dialect of the language, which they feel no need to learn, would postpone the teaching of reading too long. Many would never be ready to learn to read if readiness depended on losing their speech divergence in the classroom. The problem is not simply one of teaching children a new dialect. Children, the divergent among them, certainly have facility in language learning. The problem involves the extinction of their existing dialect, one which receives continuous reinforcement in basic communications outside of the classroom. Labov's research in New York indicates that divergent speakers do not seem to make a conscious effort to use language forms which they recognize as socially preferred until adolescence. Younger children may hear differences but lack the insight to realize which forms are socially preferred. Of course, teenagers may deliberately avoid preferred forms, too, as they reject adult ways and adult values.

In essence the child who is made to accept another dialect for learning must accept the view that his own language is inferior. In a very real sense, since this is the language of his parents, his family, his community, he must reject his own culture and himself, as he is, in order to become something else. This is perhaps too much to ask of any child. Even those who succeed may carry permanent scars. The school may force many to make the choice between self-respect and school acceptance. And all this must be accomplished on the faith of the learner that by changing his language he will do himself some good. As one teenager remarked to me, "Ya man, alls I gotta do is walk right and talk right and they gonna make me president of the United States."

The only practical alternative I feel is the third one. It depends on acceptance by the school and particularly by the teacher of the language which the learner brings to school. Here are some key aspects of this approach:

1. Literacy is built on the base of the child's existing language.
2. This base must be a solid one. Children must be helped to develop a pride in their language and confidence in their ability to use their language to communicate their ideas and express themselves.
3. In reading instruction, the focus must be on learning to read. No attempt to change the child's language must be permitted to enter into this process or interfere with it.
4. No special materials need to be constructed but children must be permitted, actually encouraged, to read the way they speak. Experience stories must basically be in their language.
5. Any skill instruction must be based on a careful analysis of their language.
6. Reading materials and reading instruction should draw as much as possible on experiences and settings appropriate to the children. While special dialect-based materials are impractical, we may nonetheless need to abandon our notion of universally usable reading texts and use a

variety of materials selected for suitability for the particular group of learners.

7. The teacher will speak in his own natural manner and present by example the general language community, but the teacher must learn to understand and accept the children's language. He must study it carefully and become aware of the key elements of divergence that are likely to cause difficulty. Langston Hughes has suggested an apt motto for the teacher of divergent speakers: "My motto as I live and learn, is dig, and be dug in return."

My own conviction is that even after literacy has been achieved future language change cannot come about through the extinction of the native dialect and the substitution of another. I believe that language growth must be a growth outward from the native dialect, an expansion which eventually will encompass the socially preferred forms but retain its roots. The child can expand his language as he expands his outlook, not rejecting his own sub-culture but coming to see it in its broader setting. Eventually he can achieve the flexibility of language which makes it possible for him to communicate easily in many diverse settings and on many levels.

I'd like to close with a plea. You don't have to accept what I've said. I don't ask that you believe or that you agree with my point of view. My plea is that you listen to the language of the divergent. Listen carefully and objectively. Push your preconceptions and your own ethnocentrisms aside and listen. I think that you'll find beauty and form and a solid base for understanding and communication. And as you dig you'll find that you are indeed dug in return.

SOME SOURCES OF READING PROBLEMS FOR NEGRO SPEAKERS OF NONSTANDARD ENGLISH

by William Labov

It seems natural to look at any educational problem in terms of the particular type of ignorance which is to be overcome. In this discussion, we will be concerned with two opposing and complementary types:

> ignorance of standard English rules on the part of speakers of nonstandard English
>
> ignorance of nonstandard English rules on the part of teachers and text writers

In other words, the fundamental situation that we face is one of reciprocal ignorance, where teacher and student are ignorant of each other's system, and therefore of the rules needed to translate from one system to another.

The consequences of this situation may be outlined in the following way. When the teacher attempts to overcome the first kind of ignorance by precept and example in the classroom, she discovers that the student shows a strong and

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Reprinted by permission from A. Frazier (ed.), New Directions in Elementary English (Champaign, Ill., National Council of Teachers of English, 1967), pp. 140-67. This paper was first given at a meeting of the NCTE in the spring of 1966, and summarizes some preliminary findings of research on nonstandard English in urban ghetto areas for the U.S. Office of Education. The view of the problem and the preliminary data given here are in general supported by the findings of the complete study. Several additions and corrections are indicated in the text in square brackets; references to later publications which report the complete results of this research have been added to the footnotes.

inexplicable resistance to learning the few simple rules that he needs to know. He is told over and over again, from the early grades to the twelfth, that -ed is required for the past participle ending, but he continues to write:

I have live here twelve years.

and he continues to mix up past and present tense forms in his reading. In our present series of interviews with Harlem youngsters from ten to sixteen years old, we ask them to correct to classroom English such sentences as the following:[1]

He pick me.
He don't know nobody.
He never play no more, man.
The man from U.N.C.L.E. hate the guys from Thrush.

Words such as man and guys are frequently corrected, and ain't receives a certain amount of attention. But the double negative is seldom noticed, and the absence of the grammatical signals -s and -ed is rarely detected by children in the fifth, sixth, or seventh grades. There can be little doubt that their ignorance of these few fundamental points of English inflection is connected with the fact that most of them have difficulty in reading sentences at the second grade level.

There are many reasons for the persistence of this ignorance. Here I will be concerned with the role played by the second type of ignorance: the fact that the child's teacher has no systematic knowledge of the nonstandard forms which oppose and contradict standard English. Some teachers are reluctant to believe that there are systematic principles in nonstandard English which differ from those of standard English. They look upon every deviation from schoolroom English as inherently evil, and they attribute these mistakes to laziness, sloppiness, or the child's natural disposition to be wrong. For these teachers, there is no substantial difference in the teaching of reading and the teaching of geography. The child is simply ignorant of geography; he does not have a well-formed system of nonstandard geography to be analyzed and corrected. From this point of view, teaching English is a question of imposing rules upon chaotic and shapeless speech, filling a vacuum by supplying rules where no rules existed before.

Other teachers are sincerely interested in understanding the language of the children, but their knowledge is fragmentary and ineffective. They feel that the great difficulties in teaching Negro and Puerto Rican children to read are due in part to the systematic contradictions between the rules of language used by the child and the rules used by the teacher. The contribution which I hope to make here is to supply a systematic basis for the study of nonstandard English of Negro and Puerto Rican children, and some factual information, so that educators and text writers can design their teaching efforts with these other systems in mind.

Priority of Problems

Within the school curriculum, there seems to be an order of priority of educational problems that we face in large urban centers. Many skills have to be acquired before we can say that a person has learned standard English.[2] The following list is a scale of priority that I would suggest as helpful in concentrating our attention on the most important problems:

a. Ability to understand spoken English (of the teacher).
b. Ability to read and comprehend.
c. Ability to communicate (to the teacher) in spoken English.
d. Ability to communicate in writing.
e. Ability to write in standard English grammar.
f. Ability to spell correctly.
g. Ability to use standard English grammar in speaking.
h. Ability to speak with a prestige pattern of pronunciation (and avoid stigmatized forms).

I would revise this list if it appeared that the teacher could not understand literally the speech or writing of the child;

weaknesses in c or d could conceivably interfere with the solution to b. But considering all possibilities, this list would be my best estimate, as a relative outsider to the field of elementary education; it is of course subject to correction by educators.

In dealing with children from English-speaking homes, we usually assume a. In the extreme cases where the child cannot understand the literal meaning of the teacher, we have to revise our approach to teach this ability first. For the most part, however, we take the first academic task of the child to be b, developing the ability to read and comprehend. Certainly reading is first and most urgent in terms of its effect on the rest of learning, and it is most seriously compromised in the schools of the ghetto areas in large Northern cities. The problem of reading is so striking today that it offers a serious intellectual challenge as well as a pressing social problem. One must understand why so many children are not learning to read, or give up any claim to understand the educational process as a whole.

Structural vs. Functional Conflicts

We have dealt so far with a series of abilities. Obviously the desire to learn is in some way prior to the act of learning. Our own current research for the Office of Education is concerned with two aspects of the problem:[3]

(a) Structural conflicts of standard and nonstandard English: interference with learning ability stemming from a mismatch of linguistic structures.

(b) Functional conflicts of standard and nonstandard English: interference with the desire to learn standard English stemming from a mismatch in the functions which standard and nonstandard English perform in a given culture.

In the discussion that follows, we will be concerned only with the first type of conflict.

We should also consider whose speech, and whose learning problems, must be analyzed. Here again there is an order of priority, based on the numbers of people involved, the extent of neglect, and the degree of structural differences involved. In these terms, the educational problems of the Negro children in large cities must be considered most pressing; secondly, those of Puerto Rican and Mexican children from Spanish-speaking homes; and third, the problems of white youth from Appalachian backgrounds and other underprivileged areas.

Is there a Negro speech pattern? This question has provoked a great deal of discussion in the last few years, much more than it deserves. At many meetings on educational problems of ghetto areas, time which could have been spent in constructive discussion has been devoted to arguing the question as to whether Negro dialect exists. The debates have not been conducted with any large body of factual information in view, but rather in terms of what the speakers wish to be so, or what they fear might follow in the political arena.

For those who have not participated in such debates, it may be difficult to imagine how great are the pressures against the recognition, description, or even mention of Negro speech patterns.[4] For various reasons, many teachers, principals, and civil rights leaders wish to deny that the existence of patterns of Negro speech is a linguistic and social reality in the United States today. The most careful statement of the situation as it actually exists might read as follows: *Many features of pronunciation, grammar, and lexicon are closely associated with Negro speakers—so closely as to identify the great majority of Negro people in the Northern cities by their speech alone*.

The match between this speech pattern and membership in the Negro ethnic group is of course far from complete. Many Negro speakers have none—or almost none—of these features.

Many Northern whites, living in close proximity to Negroes, have these features in their own speech. But this overlap does not prevent the features from being identified with Negro speech by most listeners: we are dealing with a stereotype which provides correct identification in the great majority of cases, and therefore with a firm base in social reality. Such stereotypes are the social basis of language perception; this is merely one of many cases where listeners generalize from the variable data to categorical perception in absolute terms. Someone who uses a stigmatized form 20 to 30 percent of the time will be heard as using this form all of the time.[5] It may be socially useful to correct these stereotypes in a certain number of individual cases, so that people learn to limit their generalizations to the precise degree that their experience warrants: but the overall tendency is based upon very regular principles of human behavior, and people will continue to identify as Negro speech the pattern which they hear from the great majority of the Negro people that they meet.

In the South, the overlap is much greater. There is good reason to think that the positive features of the Negro speech pattern all have their origin in dialects spoken by both Negroes and whites in some parts of the South. Historically speaking, the Negro speech pattern that we are dealing with in Northern cities is a regional speech pattern. We might stop speaking of Negro speech, and begin using the term "Southern regional speech", if that would make the political and social situation more manageable. But if we do so, we must not deceive ourselves and come to believe that this is an accurate description of the current situation. The following points cannot be overlooked in any such discussion:

1. For most Northern whites, the only familiar example

of Southern speech is that of the Negro people they hear, and these Southern features function as markers of Negro ethnic membership, not Southern origin.

2. Many characteristic features of Southern speech have been generalized along strictly ethnic lines in Northern cities. For example, the absence of a distinction between /i/ and /e/ before nasals [*pin* equal to *pen*] has become a marker of the Negro group in New York City, so that most young Negro children of Northern and Southern background alike show this feature while no white children are affected.

3. In this merger of Northern and Southern patterns in the Northern Negro communities, a great many Southern features are being eliminated. Thus in New York and other Northern cities, we find the young Negro people do not distinguish *four* and *for*, *which* and *witch*; while monophthongization of *high* and *wide* is common, the extreme fronting of the initial vowel to the position of *cat* or near it, is less and less frequent; the back upglide of *ball* and *hawk*, so characteristic of many Southern areas, is rarely heard; grammatical features such as the perfective auxiliary *done* in *he done told me*, or the double modal of *might could*, are becoming increasingly rare. As a result, a speaker fresh from the South is plainly marked in the Northern Negro communities, and his speech is ridiculed. Negro speech is thus not to be identified with Southern regional speech. [Moreover, there are a small but significant number of features of Negro speech which are not shared by whites in the South, such as the deletion of the reduced and contracted *'s* representing forms of *is* to yield such sentences as *He crazy*.]

4. The white Southern speech which is heard in many Northern cities—Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland—is the Southern Mountain pattern of Appalachia, and this pattern does not have many of the phonological and grammatical features of Negro speech to be discussed below in this paper.

5. Many of the individual features of Negro speech can be found in Northern white speech, as we will see, and even more so in the speech of educated white Southerners. But the frequency of these features, such as consonant cluster simplification, and their distribution in relation to grammatical boundaries, is radically different in Negro speech, and we are forced in many cases to infer the existence of different underlying grammatical forms and rules.

We can sum up this discussion of the Southern regional pattern by saying that we are witnessing the transformation of a regional speech pattern into a class and ethnic pattern in the Northern cities. This is not a new phenomenon; it has occurred many times in the history of English. According to H. Kökeritz and H.C. Wyld, such a process was taking place in Shakespeare's London, where regional dialects from the east and southeast opposed more conservative dialects within the city as middle class and lower class speech against aristocratic speech.[6] We see the same process operating today in the suburbs of New York City; where the Connecticut and New Jersey patterns meet the New York City pattern, in the overlapping areas, the New York City pattern becomes associated with lower socioeconomic groups.[7]

The existence of a Negro speech pattern must not be confused of course with the myth of a biologically, racially, exclusively Negro speech. The idea that dialect differences are due to some form of laziness or carelessness must be rejected with equal firmness. Anyone who continues to endorse such myths can be refuted easily by such subjective reaction tests as the Family Background test which we are using in our current research in Harlem. Sizable extracts from the speech of fourteen individuals are played in sequence for listeners who are asked to identify the family backgrounds of each.[8] So far, we find no one who can even come close to a correct identification of Negro and white speakers. This result does not contradict the statement that there exists a socially based Negro speech pattern: it supports everything that I have said above on this point. The voices heard on the test are the exceptional cases: Negroes raised without any Negro friends in solidly white areas; whites raised in areas dominated by Negro cultural values; white Southerners in Gullah-speaking territory; Negroes from small Northern communities untouched by recent migrations; college educated Negroes who reject the Northern ghetto and the South alike. The speech of these individuals does not identify them as Negro or white because they do not use the speech patterns which are characteristically Negro or white for Northern listeners. The identifications made by these listeners, often in violation of actual ethnic membership categories, show that they respond to Negro speech patterns as a social reality.

Relevant Patterns of Negro Speech

One approach to the study of nonstandard Negro speech is to attempt a complete description of this form of language without direct reference to standard English. This approach can be quite revealing, and can save us from many pitfalls in the easy identification of forms that are only apparently similar. But as an overall plan, it is not realistic. We are far from achieving a complete description of standard English, to begin with; the differences between nonstandard Negro speech and standard English are slight compared to their similarities; and finally, some of these differences are far more relevant to reading problems than others. Let us therefore consider some of the most relevant patterns of Negro speech from the point of view of reading problems.

Some Negro-white differences are plainly marked and easy for any observer to note. In the following examples, the Negro forms are patterns which frequently occur in our recordings of individual and group sessions with boys from 10 to 17 years old—ranging from careful speech in face-to-face interaction with adults to the most excited and spontaneous activity within the primary (closed network) group:[9]

Negro	White
It don't all be her fault.	It isn't always her fault.
Hit him upside the head.	Hit him in the head.
The rock say "Shhh!"	The rock went "Shhh!"
I'm a shoot you.	I'm g'na shoot you.
I wanna be a police.	I wanna be a policeman.
Ah 'on' know. $[\overset{2}{a}\ \overset{4}{o}\ \overset{3}{no}]$	I d'know. $[\overset{2}{a}^{I}dn\overset{3}{o}^{\overset{1}{U}}]$

Now consider the following examples, in which Negro-white differences are less plainly marked and very difficult for most people to hear:

Negro	White
He [pæsɨm] yesterday.	He [pæsd̥ɨm] yesterday.
Give him [ðe⊤] book.	Give him [ðɛ⊥] book.
This [jɔːɤ] place?	This [jɔːᵊ] place?
[ðæs] Nick boy.	[ðæᵗs] Nick's boy.
He say, [kæːᵊl] is.	He says, [kærəl] is.
My name is [bu].	My name is [bu?].

This second series represents a set of slight phonetic differences, sometimes prominent, but more often unnoticed by the casual listener. These differences are much more significant than the first set in terms of learning and reading standard English. In truth, the differences are so significant that they will be the focus of attention in the balance of this paper. The slight phonetic signals observed here indicate systematic differences that can lead to reading problems and problems of being understood.

Corresponding to the phonetic transcriptions on the left, we can and do infer such grammatical constructions and lexical forms as:

He pass him yesterday.
Give him they book.
This you-all place?

That's Nick boy.
He say, Ca'ol is.
My name is Boo.

Each of these sentences is representative of a large class of phonological and grammatical differences which mark non-standard Negro speech as against standard English. The most important are those in which large scale phonological differences coincide with important grammatical differences. The result of this coincidence is the existence of a large number of homonyms in the speech of Negro children which are different from the set of homonyms in the speech system used by the teacher. If the teacher knows about this different set of homonyms, no serious problems in the teaching of reading need occur; but if the teacher does not know, there are bound to be difficulties.

The simplest way to organize this information seems to be under the headings of the important rules of the sound system which are affected. By using lists of homonyms as examples, it will be possible to avoid a great deal of phonetic notation, and to stay with the essential linguistic facts. In many cases, the actual phonetic form is irrelevant: it is the presence or absence of a distinction which is relevant. Thus, for example, it makes no differences whether a child says [pɪn] or [pɪᵊn] or [peːᵊn] or [pɛn] for the word *pen*; what counts is whether or not this word is distinct from *pin*. The linguistic fact of interest is the existence of contrast, not the particular phonetic forms that are heard from one moment to another. A child might seem to distinguish [pɪn] and [pɛn] in Northern style in one pair of sentences, but if the basic phonemic contrast is not present, the same child might reverse the forms in the next sentence, and say [pɪn] for *ink pen* and [pɛn] for *safety pin*. A linguistic orientation will not supply teachers with a battery of phonetic symbols, but rather encourage them to observe what words can or cannot be distinguished by the children they are teaching.

Some Phonological Variables and Their Grammatical Consequences

1. r-lessness. There are three major dialect areas in the Eastern United States where the r of spelling is not pronounced as a consonant before other consonants or at the ends of words: Eastern New England, New York City, and the South (Upper and Lower). Thus speakers from Boston, New York, Richmond, Charleston, or Atlanta will show only a lengthened vowel in car, guard, for, etc., and usually an obscure centering glide [schwa] in place of r in fear, feared, care, cared, moor, moored, bore, bored, etc. This is what we mean by r-less pronunciation. Most of these areas have been strongly influenced in recent years by the r-pronouncing pattern which is predominant in broadcasting, so that educated speakers, especially young people, will show a mixed pattern in their careful speech.[10] When the original r-less pattern is preserved, we can obtain such homonyms as the following:[11]

guard = god   par = pa
nor = gnaw   fort = fought
sore = saw   court = caught

and we find that yeah can rhyme with fair, idea with fear.

Negro speakers show an even higher degree of r-lessness than New Yorkers or Bostonians. The r of spelling becomes a schwa or disappears before vowels as well as before consonants or pauses. Thus in the speech of most white New Yorkers, r is pronounced when a vowel follows in four o'clock; even though the r is found at the end of a word, if the next word begins with a vowel, it is pronounced as a consonantal [r]. For most Negro speakers, r is still not pronounced in this position, and so never heard at the end of the word four. The white speaker is helped in his reading or spelling by the existence of the alternation: [fɔ:fi:t, fɔrəklak], but the Negro speaker has no such clue to the underlying (spelling) form of the word *four*. Furthermore, the same Negro speaker will often not pronounce intervocalic *r* in the middle of a word, as indicated in the dialect spelling *inte'ested*, *Ca'ol*. He has no clue, in his own speech, to the correct spelling form of such words, and may have another set of homonyms besides those listed above:

Carol = Cal
Paris = pass
terrace = test

2. *l-lessness*. The consonant *l* is a liquid very similar to *r* in its phonetic nature. The chief difference is that with *l* the center of the tongue is up, and the sides are down, while with *r* the sides are up but the center does not touch the roof of the mouth. The pattern of *l*-dropping is very similar to that of *r*, except that it has never affected entire dialect areas in the same sweeping style.[12] When *l* disappears, it is often replaced by a back unrounded glide, sometimes symbolized [ɤ], instead of the center glide that replaces *r*; in many cases, *l* disappears entirely, especially after the back rounded vowels. The loss of *l* is much more marked among the Negro speakers we have interviewed than among whites in Northern cities, and we therefore have much greater tendencies towards such homonyms as:

toll = toe   all = awe
help = hep   Saul = saw
tool = too   fault = fought

3. *Simplification of consonant clusters*. One of the most complex variables appearing in Negro speech is the general tendency towards the simplification of consonant clusters at the ends of words. A great many clusters are involved, primarily those which end in /t/ or /d/, /s/ or /z/.[13] We are

actually dealing with two distinct tendencies: (1) a general tendency to reduce clusters of consonants at the ends of words to single consonants, and (2) a more general process of reducing the amount of information provided after stressed vowels, so that individual final consonants are affected as well. The first process is the most regular and requires the most intensive study in order to understand the conditioning factors involved.

The chief /t,d/ clusters that are affected are (roughly in order of frequency) /-st, -ft, -nt, -nd, -ld, -zd, -md/. Here they are given in phonemic notation; in conventional spelling we have words such as _past_, _passed_, _lift_, _laughed_, _bent_, _bend_, _fined_, _hold_, _poled_, _old_, _called_, _raised_, _aimed_. In all these cases, if the cluster is simplified, it is the last element that is dropped. Thus we have homonyms such as:

past = pass   mend = men
rift = riff   wind = wine
meant = men   hold = hole

If we combine the effect of -_ld_ simplification, loss of -_l_, and monophthongization of /ay/ and /aw/, we obtain

[šiwa:ɤ]   She wow! = She wild!

and this equivalence has in fact been found in our data. It is important to bear in mind that the combined effect of several rules will add to the total number of homonyms, and even more, to the unexpected character of the final result:

told = told = toe

The first impression that we draw, from casual listening, is that Negro speakers show much more consonant cluster simplification than white speakers. But this conclusion is far from obvious when we examine the data carefully. Table 1 shows the total simplification of consonant clusters for two speakers: BF is a Negro working class man, 45 years old, raised in New York City; AO is a white working class man, of Austrian-German background, 56 years old, also raised in New York City but with little contact with Negroes.

Table 1

Overall Simplification of /t,d/ Consonant Clusters For One Negro and One White New York City Speaker

	BF (Negro)		AO (White)	
	Number Simplified	Total Clusters	Number Simplified	Total Clusters
/-st/	29	37	18	23
/-ft/	7	9	0	2
/-nt/	8	16	14	29
/-nd/	8	14	8	14
/-ld/	8	15	2	4
/-zd/	5	8	3	4
/-md/	2	3	0	1
other	4	4	1	4
Total	71	106	46	81

The overall percentage of simplification for BF is 67 percent, not very much more than AO, 57 percent. Furthermore, the individual clusters show remarkably similar patterns; for the larger cells, the percentages are almost identical. It is true that the social distribution of this feature is wider for Negroes than for whites, but the sharpest differences are not in this particular phonetic process. As we shall see below, it is in the nature of the grammatical conditioning that restricts the deletion of the final consonant.

The other set of clusters which are simplified are those ending in /-s/ or /-z/, words like *axe* /æks/, *six* /siks/, *box* /baks/, *parts* /parts/, *aims* /eymz/, *rolls* /rowlz/, *leads* /liydz/, *besides* /bisaydz/, *John's* /džanz/, that's /ðæts/, *it's* /its/, *its* /its/. The situation here is more complex than with the /t,d/ clusters, since in some cases the first element of the cluster is lost, and in other cases the second element.[14] Furthermore, the comparison of the same two speakers as shown above shows a radical difference (see Table 2).

Table 2

Overall Simplification of /s,z/ Consonant Clusters For One Negro and One White New York City Speaker

BF (Negro)			AO (White)		
1st Cons. Dropped	2nd Cons. Dropped	Total Clusters	1st Cons. Dropped	2nd Cons. Dropped	Total Clusters
31	18	98	6	4	69

This overall view of the situation is only a preliminary to a much more detailed study, but it does serve to show that the simplification of the /s,z/ clusters is much more characteristic of Negro speakers than of white speakers. The comparison of these two speakers is typical of the several hundred Negro and white subjects that we have studied so far in our current research.

In one sense, there are a great many homonyms produced by this form of consonant cluster simplification, as we shall see when we consider grammatical consequences. But many of these can also be considered to be grammatical differences rather than changes in the shapes of words. The /t,d/ simplification gives us a great many irreducible homonyms, where a child has no clue to the standard spelling differences from his own speech pattern. Though this is less common in the case of /s,z/ clusters, we have

six = sick   Max = Mack
box = bock   mix = Mick

as possible homonyms in the speech of many Negro children.

4. Weakening of final consonants. It was noted above that the simplification of final consonant clusters was part of a more general tendency to produce less information after stressed vowels, so that final consonants, unstressed final

vowels, and weak syllables show fewer distinctions and more reduced phonetic forms than initial consonants and stressed vowels. This is a perfectly natural process in terms of the amount of information required for effective communication, since the number of possible words which must be distinguished declines sharply after we select the first consonant and vowel. German and Russian, for example, do not distinguish voiced and voiceless consonants at the ends of words. However, when this tendency is carried to extremes (and a nonstandard dialect differs radically from the standard language in this respect), it may produce serious problems in learning to read and spell.

This weakening of final consonants is by no means as regular as the other phonological variables described above. Some individuals appear to have generalized the process to the point where most of their syllables are of the CV type, and those we have interviewed in this category seem to have the most serious reading problems of all. In general, final /t/ and /d/ are the most affected by the process. Final /d/ may be devoiced to a [t]-like form, or disappear entirely. Final /t/ is often realized as glottal stop, as in many English dialects, but more often disappears entirely. Less often, final /g/ and /k/ follow the same route as /d/ and /t/: /g/ is devoiced or disappears, and /k/ is replaced by glottal stop or disappears. Final /m/ and /n/ usually remain in the form of various degrees of nasalization of the preceding vowel. Rarely, sibilants /s/ and /z/ are weakened after vowels to the point where no consonant is heard at all. As a result of these processes, one may have such homonyms as:

Boot = Boo[15]   seat = seed = see
road = row   poor = poke = pope[16]
feed = feet   bit = bid = big

It is evident that the loss of final /l/ and /r/, discussed above, is another aspect of this general weakening of final consonants, though of a much more regular nature than the cases considered in this section.

5. Other phonological variables. In addition to the types of homonymy singled out in the preceding discussion, there are a great many others which may be mentioned. They are of less importance for reading problems in general, since they have little impact upon inflectional rules, but they do affect the shapes of words in the speech of Negro children. There is no distinction between /i/ and /e/ before nasals in the great majority of cases. In the parallel case before /r/, and sometimes /l/, we frequently find no distinction between the vowels /ih/ and /eh/. The corresponding pair of back vowels before /r/ are seldom distinguished: that is, /uh/ and /oh/ fall together. The diphthongs /ay/ and /aw/ are often monophthongized, so that they are not distinguished from /ah/. The diphthong /oy/ is often a monophthong, especially before /l/, and cannot be distinguished from /ɔh/.

Among other consonant variables, we find the final fricative /θ/ is frequently merged with /f/, and similarly final /ð/ with /v/. Less frequently, /θ/ and /ð/ become /f/ and /v/ in intervocalic position. Initial consonant clusters which involve /r/ show considerable variation: /str/ is often heard as /skr/; /šr/ as [sw, sr, sϕ]. In a more complex series of shifts, /r/ is frequently lost as the final element of an initial cluster.

As a result of these various phonological processes, we find that the following series of homonyms are characteristic of the speech of many Negro children:

pin = pen
tin = ten
since = cents

beer = bear
cheer = chair
steer = stair
peel = pail

poor = pour
sure = shore
moor = more

find = found = fond
time = Tom
pound = pond

boil = ball
oil = all

Ruth = roof
death = deaf

stream = scream
strap = scrap

Changes in the Shapes of Words

The series of potential homonyms given in the preceding sections indicate that Negro children may have difficulty in recognizing many words in their standard spellings. They may look up words under the wrong spellings in dictionaries, and be unable to distinguish words which are plainly different for the teacher. If the teacher is aware of these sources of confusion, she may be able to anticipate a great many of the children's difficulties. But if neither the teacher nor the children are aware of the great differences in their sets of homonyms, it is obvious that confusion will occur in every reading assignment.

However, the existence of homonyms on the level of a phonetic output does not prove that the speakers have the same sets of mergers on the more abstract level which corresponds to the spelling system. For instance, many New Yorkers merge sore and saw in casual speech, but in reading style, they have no difficulty in pronouncing the /r/ where it belongs. Since the /r/ in sore reappears before a following vowel, it is evident that an abstract //r//[17] occurs in their lexical system: //sɔr//. Thus the standard spelling system finds support in the learned patterns of careful speech, and in the alternations which exist within any given style of speech.

The phonetic processes discussed above are often considered to be "low level" rules—that is, they do not affect the underlying or abstract representations of words. One piece of evidence for this view is that the deletable final /r, l, s, z, t, d/ tend to be retained when a vowel follows at the beginning of the next word. This effect of a following vowel would seem to be a phonetic factor, restricting the operation of a phonetic rule; in any case, it is plain that the final consonant must "be there" in some abstract sense, if it appears in this prevocalic position. If this were not the case, we would find a variety of odd final consonants appearing, with no fixed relation to the standard form.[18]

For all of the major variables that we have considered, there is a definite and pronounced effect of a following vowel in realizing the standard form. Fig. 1 shows the effect of a following vowel on final /-st/ in the speech of four Negro and three white subjects. In every case, we find that the percent of simplification of the cluster falls when a vowel follows.

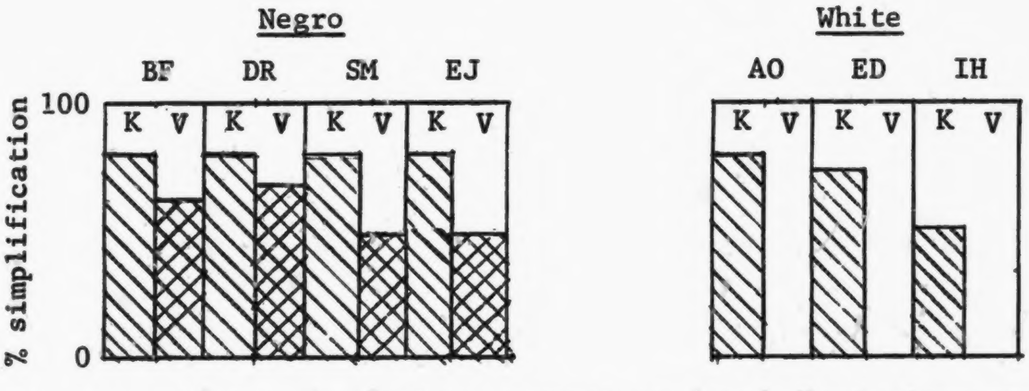


Fig. 1. Effect of a Following Vowel on /-st/ Final Clusters for Four Negro and Three White Speakers

The same argument, however, can be used to argue that the Negro speakers have underlying forms considerably different from those of white speakers. The white speakers showed almost as much overall simplification of the clusters before a following consonant, but none at all before a following vowel: in other words, their abstract forms were effectively equivalent to the spelling forms. The Negro speakers showed only a limited reduction in the degree of simplification when a vowel followed.

We can explore this situation more carefully when we consider grammatical conditioning. But we can point to one situation which suggests the existence of nonstandard underlying forms. In the most casual and spontaneous speech of the young Negro people whose language we have been examining, the plural //-s// inflection is seldom deleted. It follows the same phonetic rules as in standard English: (1) after sibilants /s, z, š, ž/, the regular plural is [əz]; (2) after other voiceless consonants, [s]; and (3) elsewhere, [z]. The regular form of the plural after a word like *test*, *desk*, is [s], as in [desks]. If the rules were so ordered that we began with the abstract form //desk//, added the //-s//, and then deleted the /k/ in the consonant cluster simplification process, we would find the final phonetic form [dɛs:]. We do in fact sometimes find this form, in a context which implies the plural. But more often, we find [dɛsəz, gosəz, tosəz] as the plurals of *desk*, *ghost* and *toast*.

[A form such as [dɛsəz] is consistent with an order of the rules which begins with //des//, or reduces //desk// immediately to /des/. Then the plural //-s// is added, and the phonetic rules give us [dɛsəz]. It should be emphasized that those speakers who use this form do so consistently, frequently, and in the most careful speech; it is not a slip of the tongue. On the contrary, clusters such as -*sps*, -*sts*, -*sks* are almost impossible for many Negro children to articulate. Even with direct modeling, they find it extremely difficult to repeat the standard forms of *wasps*, *lists*, *desks*, etc.[18a] It is quite common for children to produce under pressure such forms as [lɪstsəsəsəs], a recursive process, as a result of their efforts to produce the -*sts* cluster.

Forms such as singular [dɛs], plural [dɛsəz] give no support for an underlying spelling form *desk*. It is true that they are not inconsistent with a spelling *desk*, for an automatic rule simplifies -*sks* in 100 percent of the cases, changing -sk+s to -s+s. But there is no way for the Negro child to differentiate *mess*, *messes* from *des'*, *desses*, on the basis of his own native speech forms. Therefore he can only memorize from school lessons which words have final consonants after -*s*. In the case of verbs such as *test*, and their derived nouns, there is no problem, for the form *testing* preserves the final -*t*; but most words in this class have no derived forms or inflectional forms in which a vowel follows the stem. When the next word begins with a vowel, the effect is often not strong enough to bring out the underlying final consonant in the speech of adults, and the listener does not hear the full form as regularly as he does in *testing*. There are, of course, dialects which resolve this problem in other ways by changing the rules for epenthetic vowels, yielding *deskes*, *testes* and *waspes*, but this is more characteristic of white Appalachian speech than Southern Negro speech.]

Grammatical Correlates of the Phonological Variables

As we examine the various final consonants affected by the phonological processes, we find that these are the same consonants which represent the principal English inflections. The shifts in the sound system therefore often coincide with grammatical differences between nonstandard and standard English, and it is usually difficult to decide whether we are dealing with a grammatical or a phonological rule. In any case, we can add a great number of homonyms to the lists given above when we consider the consequences of deleting final /r/, /l/, /s/, /z/, /t/, and /d/.

1. *The possessive*. In many cases, the absence of the possessive //-s// can be interpreted as a reduction of consonant clusters, although this is not the most likely interpretation. The //-s// is absent just as frequently after vowels as after consonants for many speakers. Nevertheless, we can say that the overall simplification pattern is favored by the absence of the //-s// inflection. In the case of //-r//, we find more direct phonological influence: two possessive pronouns which end in /r/ have become identical to the personal pronoun:

[ðeɪ] book   not   [ðɛːə] book

In rapid speech, one can not distinguish *you* from *your* from *you-all*. This seems to be a shift in grammatical forms, but the relation to the phonological variables is plain when we consider that *my*, *his*, *her*, and *our* remain as possessive pronouns. No one says *I book*, *he book*, *she book* or *we book*, for there is no phonological process which would bring the possessives into near-identity with the personal pronouns.[19]

2. *The future*. The loss of final /l/ has a serious effect on the realization of future forms:

you'll = you   he'll = he
they'll = they   she'll = she

In many cases, therefore, the colloquial future is identical with the colloquial present. The form *will* is still used in its emphatic or full form, and the *going to* is frequent, so there is no question about the grammatical category of the future.[20] One form of the future with very slight phonetic substance is preserved, the first person *I'm a shoot you*: there is no general process for the deletion of this *m*.

3. *The copula*. The verb forms of *be* are frequently not realized in sentences such as *you tired* or *he in the way*. If we examine the paradigm, we find that it is seriously affected by phonological processes:

I'm ≠ I   we're = we
you're ≃ you   you're ≃ you
he's ? he   they're = they

The loss of final /z/ after vowels is not so frequent as to explain the frequency of the absence of *-s* in *he's*, and it is reasonable to conclude that grammatical rules have been generalized throughout the paradigm—still not affecting *I'm* in the same way as the others, as we would expect, since phonological rules are not operating to reduce /m/.

4. *The past*. Again, there is no doubt that phonological processes are active in reducing the frequency of occurrence of the /t,d/ inflection.

pass = past = passed   pick = picked
miss = mist = missed   loan = loaned
fine = find = fined   raise = raised

At the same time, there is no question about the existence of a past tense category. The irregular past tense forms, which are very frequent in ordinary conversation, are plainly marked as past no matter what final simplification takes place.

I told him [atoɨm]   he kept mine [hikɛpma$^{\text{I}}$n]

The problem which confronts us concerns the form of the regular suffix //-ed//. Is there such an abstract form in the structure of the nonstandard English spoken by Negro children? The answer will make a considerable difference both to teaching strategy and our understanding of the reading problems which children face. To approach this problem, we have used a variety of methods which it may be helpful to examine in detail.

The Problem of the -ed Suffix

The first approach to this problem is through a study of the quantitative distribution of the forms as spoken by Negro and white subjects in a variety of stylistic contexts. We contrast the simplification of consonant clusters in two situations: where the /t/ or /d/ represents a part of the root form itself [D_{MM}] and where the /t/ or /d/ represents the grammatical suffix of the past tense [D_P]. Fig. 2 shows the results for the speakers BF and AO who were first considered in Tables 1 and 2.

The Negro speaker BF shows almost the same degree of consonant cluster simplification when the /t,d/ represents a past tense as when it is a part of the original root. On the other hand, the white speaker AO simplifies very few past tense clusters. We can interpret these results in two ways: (a) BF has a generalized simplification rule without grammatical conditioning, while AO's simplification rule is strongly restricted by grammatical boundaries, or (b) BF's underlying grammar is different. If we were to rewrite his grammar to show -ed morphemes only where phonetic forms actually appear, his consonant cluster rule would look much the same as AO's. Without attempting to decide this issue now, let us examine a Negro speaker in several styles, and see if the -ed is affected by the shift.

Fig. 3 shows the percent of /t,d/ clusters simplified by DR, a Negro woman raised in North Carolina. On the left, we see the simplification of both D_{MM} and D_P in intimate family style, discussing a recent trip to North Carolina with a close relative. The pattern is similar to that of BF, with no differentiation of D_{MM} and D_P. But on the right we find a sharp differentiation of the two kinds of clusters: this is the careful style used by DR in a face-to-face interview with a white stranger. Fig. 3 shows us that the grammatical constraint which DR uses in careful speech is quite similar to the pattern used by the white speaker AO.

Stylistic context is obviously important in obtaining good information on the underlying grammatical system of Negro speakers. We may therefore profit from considering

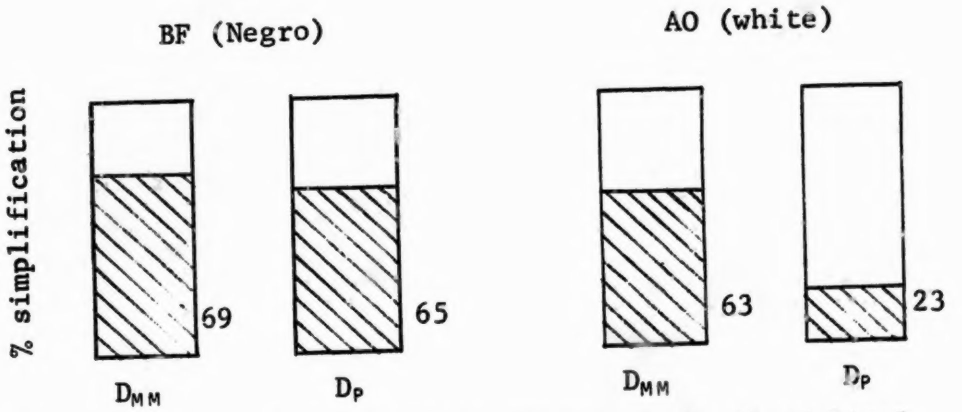
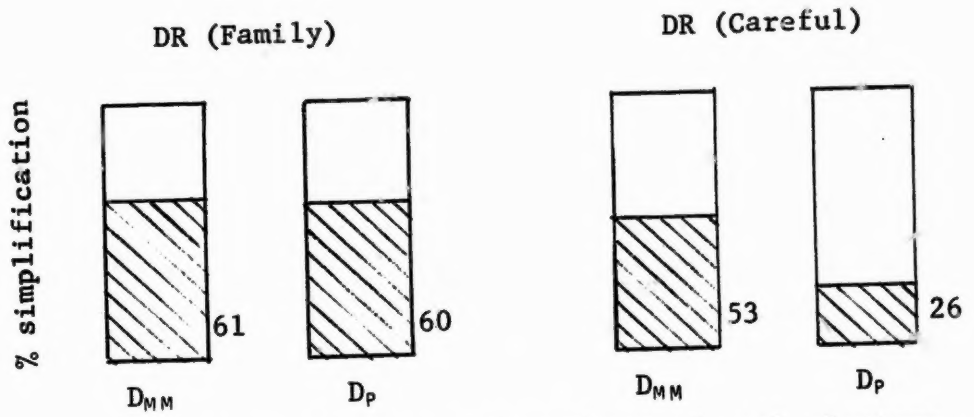


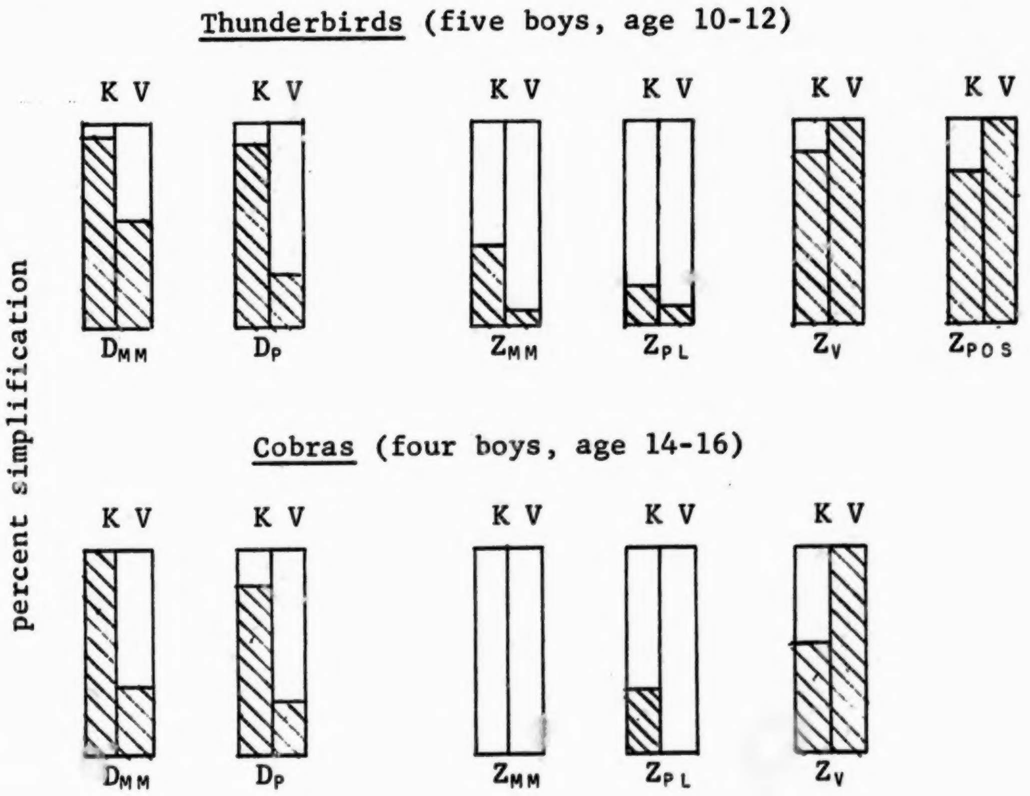
Fig. 2. Effect of Grammatical Status on /t,d/ of Final Clusters for One Negro and One White Speaker



D_{MM}: /t,d/ final in monomorphemic (root) clusters
D_P : /t,d/ final as past tense -ed morpheme

Fig. 3. Effect of Stylistic Level and Grammatical Status on /t,d/ of Final Clusters for One Negro Speaker

data where this factor is controlled. Fig. 4 shows the overall consonant cluster simplification patterns for two groups of Negro boys: the Thunderbirds, 10 to 12 years old, and the Cobras, 14 to 16. These are two peer groups which form closed networks. Most of the boys are poor readers, and they represent the groups which respond least to middle-class educational norms. In the interviews which provided this data, the groups were recorded in circumstances where they used the most excited and spontaneous speech, interacting with each other, and with only moderate influence from



Thunderbirds (five boys, age 10-12)

Cobras (four boys, age 14-16)

D_{MM} : /t,d/ final in monomorphemic (root) clusters
D_P : /t,d/ final as past tense -ed morpheme
Z_{MM} : /s,z/ final in monomorphemic (root) clusters
Z_{PL} : /s,z/ final as plural morpheme
Z_V : /s,z/ final as 3rd person singular marker
Z_{POS}: /s,z/ final as possessive morpheme

Fig. 4. Simplification of /t,d/ and /s,z/ Final Clusters for Two Groups of Negro Boys From South Central Harlem

outsiders. Each boy was recorded on a separate track, from a microphone placed only a few inches away from his mouth. (Recordings made with a single group microphone are of little value for this type of group interaction since only a small part of the data is recovered.)

The Thunderbirds show a very high percentage of simplification of clusters before consonants: 61 out of 63 for nongrammatical clusters, and 21 out of 23 for grammatical clusters. But before following vowels, only 7 out of 14 nongrammatical clusters were simplified, and even fewer—3 out of 13—for grammatical clusters.

We can conclude from these figures that there is a solid basis for the recognition of an -ed suffix: grammatical status does make a difference when the unfavorable phonological environment is set aside. Secondly, we can see that there is a good basis for approximating the lexical forms of standard English: 50 percent of the root clusters conformed to the standard forms in a favorable environment. From another point of view, however, one might say that in half the cases, the boys gave no evidence that they would recognize such spellings as test or hand as corresponding to their [tɛs] and [hæn].

The Cobras, some four years older, are very similar in their /t,d/ pattern. The phonological conditioning has become even more regular—that is, the effect of the following vowel is more extreme. All of the root clusters are simplified before consonants, but only a small percentage before vowels. The effect of grammatical status is no stronger, however. We may conclude that the process of growing up has brought better knowledge of the underlying lexical forms of standard English, but the status of the -ed morpheme is still about the same.

Perception testing. A second approach to the problem of the -ed suffix is through perception testing. It is possible that the speakers are not able to hear the difference between [pɪk] and [pɪkt], [mɛs] and [mɛst]. If the phonological reduction rule was regular enough, this might be the case. We explore this possibility by a perception test of the following form. The subject listens to a series of three words: [mɛs, mɛst, mɛs], and is asked to say which one is different. The test is repeated six times, with various random combinations of the two possibilities. Then a second series is given with /-st/ before a vowel: [mɛsʌp, mɛstʌp, mɛsʌp], etc. A person who can hear the distinctions will give a correct response in six out of six, or five out of six trials.

The Thunderbirds had no difficulty with the perception test. Three of the boys had perfect scores, and only one showed definite confusion—in fact, the one boy who came closest to standard English norms on the other tests described below. It is true that many Negro youngsters have great difficulty in perceiving phonemic contrasts which are not made in their own dialect; but in this particular case, perception of the /-t ~ -st/ distinction has less relevance to the grammatical status of -*ed* than any of the other means of investigation.

Classroom correction tests. A third means of approaching the grammatical status of -*ed* is through the classroom correction tests mentioned earlier in the discussion. The subjects are asked to change certain sentences to correct schoolroom English, starting with easy examples like *I met three mens*. Several sentences are relevant to the -*ed* problem:

> He pick me.
> I've pass my test.
> Last week I kick Donald in the mouth, so the
> teacher throwed me out the class.

As a whole, results on the classroom correction tests show that the Thunderbirds and the Cobras have little ability to detect the absence of -*ed* as a grammatical element to be corrected. They focus upon *ain't*, or *man* in *He never play no more, man*, but not upon the -*ed*. Among the Thunderbirds, only one of the five boys had this ability to supply -*ed*, and the Cobras showed no greater perception of the status of this element.[21]

The -ed reading test. The most effective way of determining the grammatical significance of -*ed* for the groups we have been working with is through a series of sentences in the reading texts used in our interviews. The relevant sentences are as follows:

(a) Last month I read five books.
(b) Tom read all the time.
(c) Now I read and write better than Alfred does.
(d) When I passed by, I read the posters.
(e) When I liked a story, I read every word.
(f) I looked for trouble when I read the news.

These sentences depend upon the unique homograph *read* to indicate whether the reader is interpreting the -*ed* suffix as a past tense signal. The first three sentences show whether the reader can use the time indicators *last month*, *now*, and the absence of -*s* to distinguish correctly between [riːd] and [rɛd]. In sentences (d), (e), and (f) the reader first encounters the -*ed* suffix, which he may or may not pronounce. If he interprets this visual signal as a sign of the past tense, he will pronounce *read* as [rɛd]; if not, he is apt to say [riːd]. The distance between the -*ed* suffix and the word *read* is kept as short as possible in sentence (d), so that here at least there is no problem of understanding -*ed* and then forgetting it.

The overall results of this test show that -*ed* is interpreted correctly less than half the time by the Thunderbirds—less often than the -*ed* suffix is pronounced. The Cobras show no material improvement in this respect. For each group, only one boy was able to approximate the standard English performance in this test.

We can conclude that the original inferences drawn from Fig. 4, based on linguistic performance in spontaneous speech, are supported by various other approaches to the -*ed* problem. The degree of uncertainty registered in the D_p column for consonant clusters, even before vowels, indicates that the -*ed* cannot function as an effective marker of the past tense for many children. Though the Cobras are four years older than the Thunderbirds, they show little change in their use of -ed. It is also true that some children—a minority in this case—can recognize -ed as a past tense marker, and use it effectively in reading, even though they usually do not pronounce it.

Grammatical Status of the //-s// Suffixes

The same quantitative method which was effective in interpreting the status of -ed can be used to analyze the various -s suffixes used by Negro children. Fig. 4 provides information on consonant cluster simplification as it affects four different categories of -s:[22]

Z_{MM}	monomorphemic -s in root clusters: axe, box
Z_{PL}	the plural -s
Z_{V}	the 3rd person singular marker of the verb
Z_{POS}	the possessive -'s

For each category, we can compare the extent of simplification before consonants and before vowels.

In the case of root clusters, the Thunderbirds show only a moderate tendency to drop the final element before consonants, and a very small tendency before vowels. In other words, the standard forms are intact. For the Cobras, this -s is always present.

The plural is rarely lost, and shows the usual effect of the following vowel. We can conclude that the plural inflection is the same for the Thunderbirds, the Cobras, and standard English.

In the case of the third person singular marker and the possessive, an extraordinary reversal is found. For the Thunderbirds, the situation can be summarized as follows:

Z_{V}	-K	-V
simplified	17	12
not simplified	4	0

Not only is the extent of simplification higher in Z_{V} than for Z_{PL}, but the direction of influence of a following vowel is reversed. No clusters at all appeared in the most favorable environment for the phonological rule. We can infer that this is no longer effectively described as consonant cluster simplification, but rather as a grammatical fact. The third person singular marker //-s// does not exist in the particular grammar being used here. The same argument holds for the possessive //-s// marker, though as noted above, we cannot extend this argument to infer a loss of the possessive in general.

A striking fact about this situation is that the older group has gained in several respects as far as approximation to standard English forms is concerned, but their development has not affected the grammatical status of the third person singular marker.

Consequences for the Teaching of Reading

Let us consider the problem of teaching a youngster to read who has the general phonological and grammatical characteristics just described. The most immediate way of analyzing his difficulties is through the interpretation of his oral reading. As we have seen, there are many phonological rules which affect his pronunciation, but not necessarily his understanding of the grammatical signals or his grasp of the underlying lexical forms. The two questions are distinct: the relations between grammar and pronunciation are complex, and require careful interpretation.

If a student is given a certain sentence to read, say *He passed by both of them*, he may say [hi pæs ba^{I} bof ə dɛm]. The teacher may wish to correct this bad reading, perhaps by saying, "No, it isn't [hi pæs ba^{I} bof ə dɛm], it's [hi pæst ba^{I} boθ əv ðɛm]." One difficulty is that these two utterances may sound the same to many children—both the reader and those listening—and they may be utterly confused by the correction. Others may be able to hear the difference, but have no idea of the significance of the extra [t] and the interdental forms of th-. The most embarrassing fact is that the boy who first read the sentence may have performed his reading task correctly, and understood the -ed suffix just as it was intended. In that case, the teacher's correction is completely beside the point.

We have two distinct cases to consider. In one case, the deviation in reading may be only a difference in pronunciation on the part of a child who has a different set of homonyms from the teacher. Here, correction might be quite unnecessary. In the second case, we may be dealing with a boy who has no concept of -ed as a past tense marker, who considers the -ed a meaningless set of silent letters. Obviously the correct teaching strategy would involve distinguishing these two cases, and treating them quite differently.

How such a strategy might be put into practice is a problem that educators may be able to solve by using information provided by linguists. As a linguist, I can suggest several basic principles derived from our work which may be helpful in further curriculum research and application.

1. In the analysis and correction of oral reading, teachers must begin to make the basic distinction between differences in pronunciation and mistakes in reading. Information on the dialect patterns of Negro children should be helpful toward this end.

2. In the early stages of teaching reading and spelling, it may be necessary to spend much more time on the grammatical function of certain inflections, which may have no function in the dialect of some of the children. In the same way, it may be necessary to treat the final elements of certain clusters with the special attention given to silent letters such as b in lamb.

3. A certain amount of attention given to perception training in the first few years of school may be extremely helpful in teaching children to hear and make standard English distinctions. But perception training need not be complete in order to teach children to read. On the contrary, most of the differences between standard and nonstandard English described here can be taken as differences in the sets of homonyms which must be accepted in reading patterns. On the face of it, there is no reason why a person cannot learn to read standard English texts quite well in a nonstandard pronunciation. Eventually, the school may wish to teach the child an alternative system of pronunciation. But the key to the situation in the early grades is for the teacher to know the system of homonyms of nonstandard English, and to know the grammatical differences that separate her own speech from that of the child. The teacher must be prepared to accept the system of homonyms for the moment, if this will advance the basic process of learning to read, but not the grammatical differences. Thus the task of teaching the child to read -*ed* is clearly that of getting him to recognize the graphic symbols as a marker of the past tense, quite distinct from the task of getting him to say [pæst] for *passed*.

If the teacher has no understanding of the child's grammar and set of homonyms, she may be arguing with him at cross purposes. Over and over again, the teacher may insist that *cold* and *coal* are different, without realizing that the child perceives this as only a difference in meaning, not in sound. She will not be able to understand why he makes so many odd mistakes in reading, and he will experience only a vague confusion, somehow connected with the ends of words. Eventually, he may stop trying to analyze the shapes of letters that follow the vowel, and guess wildly at each word after he deciphers the first few letters. Or he may lose confidence in the alphabetic principle as a whole, and try to recognize each word as a whole. This loss of confidence seems to occur frequently in the third and fourth grades, and it is characteristic of many children who are effectively nonreaders.

The sources of reading problems discussed in this paper are only a few of the causes of poor reading in the ghetto schools. But they are quite specific and easily isolated. The information provided here may have immediate application in the overall program of improving the teaching of reading to children in these urban areas.

NOTES

1. The research described here is a part of Cooperative Research Project No. 3091, U.S. Office of Education: "A Preliminary Study of the Structure of English Used by Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City." For much of the field work and analysis, I am indebted to Paul Cohen, Clarence Robins, John Lewis, Jr., and Joshua Waletzky of the project staff. The Final Report on Cooperative Research Project 3091 is available through ERIC, ED 010 688.

2. See "Stages in the Acquisition of Standard English," in Roger Shuy (ed.), Social Dialects and Language Learning (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965), pp. 77-103.

3. The continuing research discussed here is part of Cooperative Research Project No. 3288, U.S. Office of Education, "A Study of the Non-Standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City." The Final Report on Cooperative Research Project 3288 will be available through ERIC at the end of 1968.

4. These observations are based upon experience with many teachers of English, Negro and white, at summer reading institutes, conferences on social dialects, principals' conferences, and other meetings where the speech of Negro people in urban ghettos has been discussed.

5. Many examples of this stereotyping process are discussed

in William Labov, The Social Stratification of English in New York City (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1966).

6. H. Kökeritz, Shakespeare's Pronunciation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953); and H.C. Wyld, A History of Modern Colloquial English (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1920).

7. Such a phenomenon can be observed in suburban Bergen County, along the boundary of the New York City dialect area. In Closter, N.J., for example, the socioeconomic differentiation of speakers by r-pronunciation seems to be much more extreme than in the city itself: middle-class children may pronounce final and preconsonantal /r/ consistently, while working-class children will be completely r-less, and this difference is maintained over a wide range of stylistic contexts.

8. The forms for the Family Background test give the listener a limited choice of ethnic backgrounds: Irish, Afro-American, Spanish, Jewish, German, and Other White. Within each category, one can specify "S" Southern, "N" Northern, or "W" Western.

9. These data are derived from series of interviews with individuals and groups in South Central Harlem and exploratory interviews in other Northern cities: Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago.

10. In New York City, the correlation of /r/ and stylistic context follows a very regular pattern, as discussed in The Social Stratification of English in New York City, and other references cited above. Negro speakers are especially sensitive to the prestige status of /r/. The systematic shift indicates the importance of controlling the stylistic factor, as well as socioeconomic factors, in gathering data on speech patterns.

11. In many cases, pairs such as guard-god, nor-gnaw, are differentiated by vowel quality. For most Negro speakers in Northern cities, they are identical. Pairs such as sore-saw or court-caught, which oppose M.E. closed o before r to long open o, are differentiated more often by vowel quality, especially among older people. In any case, the lists of homonyms given here and elsewhere are given as examples of possible homonyms illustrative of large classes of words that are frequently identical.

It should be noted that words with mid-central vowels before *r* do not follow the *r*-less patterns discussed here; *r* appears much more frequently in such words as *work*, *shirt*, *bird*, even when it is not used after other vowels.

12. One English dialect which shows systematic *l*-lessness is Cockney, as described in E. Sivertsen, *Cockney Phonology* (Oslo, 1960).

13. When the /t/ or /d/ represents a grammatical inflection, these consonants are usually automatic alternants of the same abstract form //ed//. Phonetic rules delete the vowel (except after stems ending in /t/ or /d/, and we then have /t/ following voiceless consonants such as /p, s, š, k/ and /d/ in all other cases. In the same way /s/ and /z/ are coupled as voiceless and voiced alternants of the same //s// inflection. But in clusters that are a part of the root, we do not have such automatic alternation.

14. The loss of the first element—that is, assimilation to the following /s/—is most common in forms where the /s/ represents the verb *is* or the pronoun *us* as in *it's*, *that's* and *let's*. In none of these cases is there a problem of homonymy, even in the case of *let's* where there is no likelihood of confusion with *less*. This type of simplification will therefore not be considered in any further detail. It should be noted that "simplification" in regard to the loss of final /s/ is merely a device for presenting the data: as we will see, there are several cases where we are forced to conclude that the /s/ is not there to begin with.

15. This homonym was troublesome to us for some time. One member of the Thunderbirds is known as "Boo." We did not notice the occasional glottal stop which ended this word as a functional unit for some time; eventually we began to suspect that the underlying form was "Boot." This was finally confirmed when he appeared in sneakers labeled BOOT.

16. The word *poor* is frequently pronounced with a mid-vowel [po] even by those who do not have a complete merger of such pairs as *sure-shore*, *moor-more*. One of our Gullah-influenced South Carolina informants on Saint Helena Island is named Samuel Pope or Polk, but we cannot determine which from his pronunciation.

17. The // // notation encloses morphophonemic forms—that

is, forms of words which are the most abstract representation underlying the variants that occur in particular environments as determined by some regular process. English spelling is, on the whole, morphophonemic rather than phonemic: the stem academ-, for example, is spelled the same way even though it is pronounced very differently in academy, academic, academe and academician.

[The situation in regard to r is not quite this regular in white working-class speech. "Intrusive r" does appear at the end of saw in I saw a parade, and consonantal [r] is sometimes not pronounced in sore arm. But the general pattern indicated above prevails and provides enough support for the spelling forms.]

18. This is precisely what does happen when final consonants are lost in words that have no spelling forms, no correlates in careful speech, and no regular morphophonemic alternation. Terms used in preadolescent culture will occur with a profusion of such variants (which may be continued in the adolescent years). For example, in Chicago the term for the base used in team versions of Hide-and-Seek is the goose. This is derived from the more general term gu:l with loss of final /l/—a dialect form of goal. (Cf. the alternation Gould and Gold in proper names.) A similar phenomenon occurs in New York City, where the same item is known as the dent—related to older den. It is worth noting that both of these cases are characteristic of language change among the Negro speakers we are discussing, and illustrate the unchecked consequences of the homonymy we are considering. A more extreme case may be cited: in one group of teenage Negro boys, the position known elsewhere as War Lord (the member who arranges the details for gang fights) has shifted to a term with the underlying form //war dorf//, or possibly //waldorf// or //ward f//

18[a]. [For an account of these repetition tests, see Cooperative Research Report 3288.]

19. In the Creole-based English of Trinidad, however, we do find regularly the forms he book, she book, etc. The grammatical differences between Trinidadian English and standard English are therefore much greater than those between nonstandard American Negro English and standard English. In the same way, we find the past tense irregular forms preserved in the dialects we are studying, but only the unmarked stem he give, he tell in Trinidad. See D. Solomon, "The System of Predication in the Speech of Trinidad," Columbia University Master's Essay, 1966.

20. Given this situation, it is evident that more colloquial reading texts with contracted forms he'll and you'll will not be easy for Negro children to read. The traditional uncontracted he will and you will may seem slightly artificial to some, but will not involve the problems of homonymy discussed here.

21. In the classroom correction test, the same problem arises which affects any test given in the schoolroom: how hard is the subject trying to give the right answer? It is likely that the boy's general orientation toward the schoolroom would tend to reduce the amount of effort they put into this particular test; but we can base our conclusions on the type of grammatical feature which is noticed and corrected, rather than the total number corrected.

22. Two other types of //-s// can be isolated: the adverbial /s/ of besides, sometimes, etc., and the various contracted forms mentioned above: that's, it's and let's. The first is not frequent enough to provide good data for the small groups discussed here, and the second type shows a loss of the first element of the cluster with no grammatical effect.

ORTHOGRAPHY IN READING MATERIALS FOR BLACK ENGLISH SPEAKING CHILDREN

by Ralph W. Fasold

Reading is the process of relating written symbols to units of spoken language. There are only two basic ways in which writing systems represent speech. In a writing system based on morphological reference, each meaningful unit of spoken language is represented by a separate symbol regardless of how it is pronounced. This system is essentially the nature of Chinese orthography, and accounts for the fact that written Chinese is intelligible to speakers of different Chinese languages. Since there is no reference to pronunciation in the writing system, the same symbols can be used to represent different languages so long as those languages have roughly the same lexical items and roughly the same syntax, even when the lexical items are pronounced very differently in the various languages.

The other system identifies meaningful units less directly. In this kind of writing system, the symbols refer to the phonological aspects of the units. Two variations of writing systems with phonological reference have developed. One of these is the _alphabet_, in which each symbol refers to a sound segment; the other is the _syllabary_, in which each symbol refers to a whole syllable. The writing system used in English is an alphabet, and each letter ideally stands for one segment in English phonology.

However, the sound segments recognized by modern linguistics exist on various levels of abstraction. This fact leads to the question: At what level of abstraction could the English writing system best represent the segments of English phonology? Once this is determined, it seems reasonable to ask to what extent the English spelling system actually does represent these segments. A given spelling is correct with respect to this representation if it accurately reflects the segments at that level. A spelling is conventional if it is the usual spelling for this word. For example, if the segments of the word 'fat' at the appropriate level of abstraction are [fæt] and f is the symbol which represents [f], a is the symbol for [æ], and t is the symbol for [t], then fat is the correct spelling, and, since fat is the usual spelling for the word, it is also conventional. If the segments of the word 'cat' at this same level of abstraction are [kæt] and the symbol for [k] is k, and the symbols for [æ] and [t] are a and t respectively, then kat is the correct spelling for 'cat'. But since the accepted spelling is cat, the spelling is not conventional. If the appropriate segments of the word 'rough' are [rʌf], then the spelling rough, while it is conventional, is not correct. Finally, if someone were to spell 'mat' as mta, the spelling would be neither correct nor conventional. When the relationship between phonology and the writing system has been established, the next step is to analyze the ways in which conventional spellings are incorrect and to devise methods for teaching the child to handle these failures in the writing system.

One conceivable answer to the question of level of abstraction is that the alphabet should represent phonetic segments. In this view, the reader would have a mark on paper for every acoustic feature perceivable to the human ear. There are overwhelming objections to this view. First, because there are so many perceivable acoustic differences in speech sounds, the alphabet would need to contain a tremendous number of symbols. Second, the English alphabet is clearly not designed to handle this task, since it contains only 26 symbols. Third, the acoustic features of the pronunciation of any given word vary from one utterance of the word to another. In addition, it is obvious that not all acoustic features need to be marked, since only some of them are used to keep lexical items separate from each other. Only those which serve to separate lexical items need to be indicated in the orthography.

The most popular answer to these objections is that the writing system should represent segments at the phonemic level. By phonemic analysis, the tremendous variety of speech sounds is reduced to a relatively few segments which are distinctive. As a result, the phonemic spelling principle has been proposed. According to this principle, the ideal writing system would have only one symbol for one phoneme. The success of an existing orthography would be determined by its degree of deviation from this ideal. This suggests a certain strategy for the teaching of reading, i.e. that words whose conventional spellings conform to the phonemic principle be taught first and other words be introduced later, as anomalies. A phonemic writing system has many advantages over a phonetic one. The number of necessary symbols is reduced to a manageable number and the degree of deviation from conventional spelling is greatly reduced. In a phonetic writing system, there is no justification for using the same symbol for the [p] in 'spit' and the [pʰ] in 'pit', since there is noticeably greater aspiration on the [pʰ] in 'pit'. But by phonemic analysis, both sounds are assigned to the same phoneme and can justifiably be written with the same symbol. On the other hand, the spelling of a word such as *mussel* cannot be justified, since the phonemes of this word are something like /mʌsɨl/. The spelling *mussel* fails to conform to the phonemic principle in several ways. The first vowel should not be spelled with a u since this symbol is needed for the vowel of words like 'put' (phonemically /put/) and for part of the complex vowel nucleus of words like 'spoon' (phonemically /spuwn/). The double s is inappropriate because two symbols are used for only one phoneme. The spelling e for the phoneme /ɨ/ is not correct since the e of 'bet' is not the same as the e of 'mussel', and the symbol e is generally used for the former.

While the phonemic principle results in a great reduction in the number of necessary symbols as compared with phonetic writing, and while its application considerably reduces the number of inappropriate spellings in the conventional orthography, it still leaves a number of spelling anomalies in the conventional system. More serious, the justification of the phoneme as a linguistic entity has been called into serious question.[1] If the phoneme is not a real entity, it can hardly be the basis for the most appropriate writing system.

An alternative to the phonemic spelling principle has recently been suggested. In this view, alphabetic symbols represent phonological segments on a more abstract level. In generative phonology, there are at least two alternatives for what this level would be. The alphabetic symbols could be said to represent segments of the lexical representation. If this were the case, many conventional spellings would fail to conform to the principle because the symbols are too specific in reference. For the word 'street', to take an extreme example, the first letter in the spelling street is inappropriate to correspond to the first segment in the lexical representation, since the lexical representation need only indicate that there is a segment preceding t. The normal constraints on the structure of English morphemes precludes any segment but)s(in this position.* Similarly, the letter *r* represents the only segment possible in its position. A more appropriate spelling to represent the lexical form of 'street' would be *0t0eet*, with the zeroes merely indicating that a segment is present.[2] The other possibility within the framework of generative phonology is that the alphabetic symbols represent segments which are fully specified in accordance with the redundancy conditions on the structure of English morphemes, but not for any features determined by the phonological rules proper. Richard Stanley has proposed that phonological theory include a process by which lexical entries with partially specified segments are replaced by a representation with all segments fully specified in this way.[3] This is the level which seems most realistic and at the same time closest to what the conventional English spelling actually does represent.[4]

The arguments which show that there is an abstract but linguistically justifiable level of phonology to which conventional spelling corresponds most neatly are involved ones.[5] As we have shown above, this spelling fails to meet the requirements of the phonemic spelling principle in several ways. But as Chomsky and Halle show, this is exactly the correct spelling to represent the word 'mussel' before the phonological rules proper apply. For a number of reasons, the phonology of English must contain a rule which in one of its applications reduces the vocalic nucleus)u(in abstract representations to phonetic [ʌ]. With few exceptions, phonetic [ʊ] and [ʌ] are in complementary distribution in American English, [ʊ] occurring following nonnasal labial segments and preceding either double or final)l(or a voiceless alveolopalatal consonant--)š(or)č(--and [ʌ] appearing elsewhere.[6] If the underlying representations of words containing phonetic [ʌ] are assumed to contain underlying)u(, rules of great generality in English phonology will automatically convert this)u(to [ʌ] in the proper environments.[7]

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* In the discussion that follows, alphabetic symbols that represent phonological segments on the abstract level are given between reversed parentheses, e.g.)s(,)u(, etc.

The word 'mussel' must also contain double)s(and undergo a rule which deletes the first of two identical consonants. English phonology contains a rule which voices)s(intervocalically. Pairs like 'resent' and 'consent', and 'resist' and 'consist', illustrate this rule. In 'resent' and 'resist', the orthographic s̲ is intervocalic and is pronounced [z]. In 'consent' and 'consist', the operation of this voicing rule is blocked by the presence of)n(, and the s̲ is pronounced as a voiceless [s]. Similarly, 'dissemble' (phonetically [dɪsɛmbl̩]) contains a voiceless fricative while 'resemble' (phonetically [riyzɛmbl̩]) has the voiced counterpart. The presence of [s] in 'dissemble' can be explained if we assume that the underlying form of the word has double)s(. If this is the case, neither)s(is intervocalic and the)s(-voicing rule does not apply. At the same time, this assumption neatly fits the analysis of 'dissemble' into the prefix 'dis' and the stem 'semble'. But since 'dissemble' is not pronounced with a geminate [s], there must be a rule which simplifies geminate consonant clusters. If we extend this analysis to 'mussel', we can preserve the generality of the voicing of intervocalic [s] and still account for the pronunciation [mʌsl̩].[8]

Finally, English reduction rules will reduce)el(to [l̩].

These facts about English phonology lead to the conclusion that the abstract representation of the word 'mussel' is, in fact,)mussel(. The rules we have discussed derive the pronunciation [mʌsḷ] from this representation in the following way:

Underlying representation: mussel
u → ʌ rule: mʌssel
Voicing of intervocalic s: (does not apply)
Geminate cluster simplification rule: mʌsel
Reduction rule: mʌsḷ

While the spelling mussel is inadequate either phonetically or phonemically, it is precisely correct for the representation of the sort of underlying form suggested by Stanley. Chomsky and Halle point out that many other conventional spellings are similarly appropriate.[9]

The view of the reading educator about the nature of the relationship between speech and writing will have implications for the methodology used in teaching reading. Reading involves two tasks: (1) to determine the identity of words, and (2) to understand the grammatical relationships between them. The first task is successfully achieved when the reader associates a part of the printed matter with a word in his language.[10] Because reading also involves the second task, i.e. the understanding of the grammatical relationships among words, it may seem that dealing with the identification of words is not enough. In his book Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading, Carl Lefevre draws attention to the whole sentence before treating word identification. Since intonation plays an important role in determining syntactic structure in spoken language, Lefevre suggests that beginning readers should be taught to look for clues to intonation on the printed page. Lefevre believes that readers will be able to determine the syntactic structure of a written sentence by imagining what its intonation would be if it were spoken.[11] However it seems more reasonable to suppose that reading proceeds in exactly the reverse order. A reader can determine the proper intonation of a written sentence only from the syntactic structure. Punctuation is probably best considered a device for marking off various kinds of phrases and sentences rather than for indicating intonation directly. Once the nature of the construction of a sentence is known to the reader, he can supply the correct intonation because of his knowledge of the language he is reading. Thus, intonation seems to be of marginal importance to the reading process. If a reader can identify written words and can interpret punctuation marks, he has all the information he needs in order to understand sentences. For this reason, word identification is the *sine qua non* of successful reading.

It will be our assumption that words are most efficiently identified if the printed symbols are interpreted as referring to phonological segments rather than as direct representations of lexical items, as is true in Chinese.[12] Furthermore, we assume that the English spelling system refers approximately to the phonology of units at the level of lexical representation in the sense of generative phonology, plus the full specification of redundant features according to the constraints on the form of English morphemes.

Given these assumptions, we are ready to address ourselves to the specific problems of how children learn to read. We are arguing that spellings like *mussel* are correct even though they do not represent the surface pronunciation of the word very well. One of the crucial arguments that this spelling is correct involves the comparison of words like 'consist' with 'resist', and 'resemble' with 'dissemble', to establish the)s(-voicing and geminate consonant simplification rules. If we suppose that a child learning his first language uses evidence of this sort in some way in the process of language learning, presumably he will not acquire the language competence described by these rules until he learns items like 'resist' and 'consist', 'resemble' and 'dissemble', and realizes that they related. Our argument that mussel is the correct way to spell 'mussel' assumes that the reader has acquired the)s(-voicing and geminate consonant simplification rules, among others. If he has not yet acquired them, the conventional spelling of 'mussel' will be anomalous.

There are a great many words in English for which the conventional spellings can be shown correct in spite of the fact that they do not directly reflect the actual pronunciations of the words. But nearly all of the arguments in these cases depend on alternations among Latinate lexical items. In order to show that a is the correct letter to represent superficially different vowels in 'sane' and 'sanity', and also that the e in sane represents a vowel that is actually present in the underlying form of 'sane', it must be assumed that the reader knows both of these words and many others like them and also knows that they are related. Children are likely to lack some of these crucial lexical items in their vocabularies, and, as a result, many spellings that are correct for educated adults would be anomalous to them. If ghetto children have fewer of these Latinate words in their vocabularies, this aspect of the problem of orthography would be more acute for them than for other children. In any event, the presence or absence of these crucial items for any given child is an empirical question which would need to be answered before the type of reading techniques we will suggest could be put in effect.[13]

Further problems in teaching reading to some black children arise because of the fact that they come to school speaking the Negro dialect -- Black English. The middle-class child brings to school essentially the same dialect that he will be taught to read, i.e. standard English. The Black

English speaking child is asked to learn simultaneously the skill of reading and of speaking a new dialect which is different from his own in many important ways. To complicate the problem, his teacher often does not realize this, and what is worse, will condemn as "bad" those aspects of his dialect which differ from the standard dialect.[14] Chomsky and Halle indicate that they expect underlying forms to differ very little from dialect to dialect:

> There has, in other words, been little change in lexical representation since Middle English, and, consequently, we would expect (though we have not verified this in any detail) that lexical representation would differ very little from dialect to dialect in Modern English. If this assumption proves to be correct, it will follow that conventional orthography is probably fairly close to optimal for all Modern English dialects, as well as for the attested dialects of the past several hundred years.[15]

What is implicit in the above statement, however, is that all Modern English dialects are direct descendants of the Middle English dialects mentioned. In the case of Black English, a quite different history has been suggested. William A. Stewart has argued that modern Black English (he uses the term Negro non-standard dialect) can be traced to a variety of English creole which was used by slaves early in the history of European settlement of this continent.[16] Many of the features of this creole language originate in the African languages of the slaves. The early creole gradually became more like Standard American English, but many of the features of present-day Black English, in this view, are traceable to this creole and not to early British dialects. If some of these creole features have survived in modern Black English phonology, and furthermore, if they involve the underlying structure of lexical representations, it may well be that Chomsky and Halle's statement does not apply to this dialect of English. Most of the examples of differences between Black English and Standard English which Stewart gives are grammatical, but in one article he cites a difference in phonemic contrast:[17]

> Note that in this dialect there are no apico-dental fricatives, standard English /ð/ and /θ/ showing up as /d/ and /t/ in initial positions, and usually as /v/ and /f/ elsewhere.

Actually, this description is factually not quite right. The Black English pronunciation of words which begin with [θ] in Standard English has the affricate [tθ], if not the fricative [θ] itself. As a result, the words 'thought' and 'taught' are not homonyms in Black English and there is a phonemic difference between /t/ and /tθ ~ θ/ in the dialect. However, it could be argued that the dental fricative or affricate phonemes are restricted to word-initial position in Black English, as /h/ is in Standard English. That is, the apico-dental consonants appear in word-initial position, but nowhere else. In every other position where a word appears in Standard English with /θ/, for example, Black English has /f/. Because of this, there is no problem of a phonemic contrast in Standard English which is missing in Black English, but there is a phonemic difference none the less. The problem is that the phonemic composition of some words is different in the two dialects. For example, the word 'tooth' is phonemically /tuwθ/ in the standard dialect and /tuwf/ in Black English. According to the phonemic spelling principle, the spelling tooth is anomalous for the Black English speaker, but not for the Standard English speaker.

But since we have seen that there is evidence that the phonemic spelling principle is not appropriate as a guide for teaching reading, this is not enough. We must ask what the form of words like 'tooth' is in their underlying representations. At this level, we see that there is indeed a contrast between the [f] which matches Standard English [θ], and the

[f] which matches Standard English [f]. In certain situations, words with word-final [f] in Black English are pronounced with a [t]. Consider the two sentences:

> Get off my bike!
> Come back with my bike!

One possible Black English pronunciation of these sentences is:

> [gɪt ɔf ma bayk]
> [kəm bæk wɪf ma bayk]

In rapid speech, the [f] in 'with' can be pronounced as [t], but not the [f] in 'off':

> *[gɪt ɔt ma bayk]
> [kəm bæk wɪt ma bayk]

It is necessary, then, before the phonological rules apply, to designate which kind of [f] is which. Given the system of English phonology, it can be shown fairly convincingly that the appropriate segment to represent the underlying final consonant of 'with' is)θ(, even if it is never so pronounced. To the extent that *th* is the proper spelling for this segment, the final *th* spelling is correct for Black English as well as for Standard English.

There may be words ending in *th* and pronounced with final [f] in Black English which never fall into the environment in which [t] can appear. For these, there is no motivation to specify underlying)θ(. Since the pronunciation is always [f], one would specify the underlying representation for these words as containing)f(. The result is that while the *th* spelling is correct for some words which end in *th* in conventional spellings, *f* seems to be the correct spelling for others.

A similar situation exists for words with medial *th* spellings. A word like 'nothing' can be pronounced either [nʌfn̩] or [nʌtn̩], whereas a word like 'stiffen' can be pronounced only [stɪfn̩]. Other words spelled with medial *th* (e.g. 'ether') never fall into the environment in which [t] can be pronounced, so the correct spelling of these words, by our principle, would be with *f*. Again, some *th* spellings are correct (e.g. *th* is correct in 'nothing') and others are not (e.g. the correct spelling of 'ether' would be *efer*).

But in deciding that some conventional *th* spellings are incorrect, we are overlooking an important part of the evidence. By far the majority of the people who use the [f] pronunciation of conventionally spelled *th* do so only part of the time. The rest of the time, [θ] is used. It could be argued that the [θ] pronunciation is a borrowing from Standard English and has nothing to do with Black English phonology. If this were the case, one would expect hypercorrection to extend the [θ] pronunciation to other words with [f], so that one would observe not only both [wɪf] and [wɪθ] for 'with', but [ɔf] and [ɔθ] for 'off'. But this does not happen, since pronunciations like [ɔθ] are never heard. Clearly, Black English speakers know which words are which. The problem is how to account for this knowledge in a linguistic description of the dialect. There are at least three possible solutions. One of these would be to allow the lexical entries of the words which are sometimes pronounced with [θ] to be marked as loanwords from Standard English which, as a result, do not follow the constraints of Black English phonology. The implication is that there are two words 'with'. One is given the underlying representation)wif(, and is marked as a native word. The other is represented as)wiθ(, and is marked as a loanword exempt from the ordinary Black English constraints on the distribution of [θ].

Another solution is to assume that a speaker who uses both [f] and [θ] pronunciations is really a bilingual. Any sentence containing a [θ] pronunciation in medial or final position is not a Black English sentence at all; rather, the speaker has switched to his other language, Standard English.

However, there are innumerable cases in which a word spelled with a final or medial th is pronounced with a [θ], but this is the only feature in the entire sentence which must be considered Standard. To refer to this sort of situation as an example of bilingual code-switching would make the concept of code-switching meaningless.

The third solution is probably the best one. Since we have already seen that there is intradialectal motivation for recognizing underlying)θ(in some words which actually are pronounced with [f], we could merely extend the device to words which never are pronounced with [t] but sometimes are pronounced with [θ].

There is even more evidence that the alternation between [θ] and [f] is an integral part of the structure of Black English. Wolfram has shown that there are markedly more instances of the [θ] pronunciation if the segment is in medial position than if it is in final position.[18] This is the natural situation for the application of what Labov calls the variable rule.[19] Labov observed that the frequency of application of a phonological rule is often systematically determined by the environment. He has formulated a modification of phonological rule form in generative phonology so that the relative frequency of application according to environment can be formally indicated. It seems clear that such a rule for the variation between [f] and [θ] is part of Black English phonology. This being the case, word-medial and word-final)θ(is to be marked in the underlying representation and undergoes this variable rule. Underlying word-medial and word-final)f(does not. These arguments lead us to the conclusion that the th spelling is correct for Black English for virtually all words which are spelled conventionally in this way.[20]

Another example of the relationship of phonological rule to conventional orthography is the case of the final stop devoicing in Black English. Words ending in final voiced stops in the standard dialect end in the corresponding voiceless stop in Black English. However, the preceding vowel nucleus of such words is long in duration, like the vowel nuclei of words ending in voiced consonants in Standard English. Thus the word 'bit' in Black English is pronounced [bɪt] while 'bid' is pronounced [bɪ:t]. At first it seems that we have a contrastive difference in vowel length in Black English, but a consonantal contrast in Standard English. However, we find that the lengthening rule for vowels before voiced segments operates in Black English before laterals ([bɪ:l] 'bill', but [bɪt] 'bit') and before stops in non-final position ([bɪ:gə] 'bigger' but [bɪkə] 'bicker'). This would suggest that the proper phonemic analysis would be to allow both /d/ and /t/ to have the allophone [t] in word-final position, with vowel lengthening before the [t] of /d/ but not before the [t] of /t/. Such an analysis runs afoul of the classical problem of phonemic overlapping.[21] Another possible solution would be to posit phonemic vowel length, but this would not allow the expression of the generality about the lengthening of vowels before non-final voiced consonants. This solution, of course, would render the conventional spelling bid of 'bid' incorrect by the phonemic spelling principle. If phonemic analysis is abandoned, there is no problem. The underlying form of these words clearly has the voiced stop, and there are two ordered rules in the phonology of Black English such that the first lengthens vowels before voiced segments and the second devoices a word-final stop consonant. The first rule is shared with Standard English, but the second is peculiar to Black English. Again, the result is that the conventional spelling is correct for Black English.

A third example of the relationship of phonological rules to conventional orthography is found in connection with the Black English pronunciation of words which end in a cluster of [s] plus a voiceless stop in Standard English.[22] In Black English, there is no trace of the stop member of such clusters. Thus, 'desk' is pronounced [dɛs], 'risk' is pronounced [rɪs] and 'test' is pronounced [tɛs]. The question which needs to be answered is whether or not the final stop is present in the underlying representation. The answer will automatically solve the concomitant problem concerning whether the spellings desk, risk and test are correct for Black English.

Examination of the plurals of these words indicates that the stop member of the clusters is not present in the underlying representations. The plurals of these forms are typically pronounced [dɛsɨz], [rɪsɨz], and [tɛsɨz], respectively. As is well known, there are three forms of the English plural, depending on the preceding segment. If this segment is voiced, the plural form is [z], as in 'dogs' [dɔgz]. If it is voiceless, the plural is [s], as in 'cats' [kæts]. If the final segment is a sibilant, the plural is [ɨz], as in 'horses' [hɔrsɨz]. The use of [ɨz] as the plural marker for words like 'desk', 'risk' and 'test' indicates that there is no final stop consonant present in their underlying representations in Black English. If it were otherwise, the expected plurals would be [dɛss], [rɪss] and [tɛss], respectively.[23] These plurals would arise by application of the following operations:

Underlying representation: desk + z
Voicing assimilation: desk + s
Final cluster simplification: des + s
Boundary deletion: dess

However, if the underlying representation does not contain a final stop consonant, the derivation is as follows:

Underlying representation: des + z
Vowel epenthesis: des + ɨz
Boundary deletion: desɨz

But another set of facts complicates the picture. If a suffix beginning with a vowel is added to these forms, the final stop consonant is articulated by the majority of Black English speakers. Thus we get the pronunciations [tɛstɨn] and [rɪskiy] for 'testing' and 'risky'. The conclusion suggested by these forms would seem to be that the underlying representation must contain the final stop consonant, which seems to contradict the conclusion suggested by the plural forms. But both the plural forms and the vowel-suffix forms can be explained if the underlying representations include the final consonant and the rules are properly ordered. Something like the following three rules are needed:

1. Consonant-cluster simplification:
   sC_{st} ⇒ s in env.——— (+X)#, where X does not begin with a vowel
2. Epenthesis:
   Z + Z ⇒ Z + ɨZ in env.——— #
3. Boundary deletion:
   boundary ⇒ ∅

Rule 1 states that of two consonants at the end of a word (# symbolizes word boundary) such that the second is a stop (symbolized by C_{st}) and the first is)s(, the stop is deleted, unless followed by a suffix which begins with a vowel. The epenthesis rule (Rule 2) states that the vowel [ɨ] is inserted before a suffix which consists only of a sibilant (symbolized by Z) if the stem ends in a sibilant. Rule 3 deletes boundaries and is an ad hoc summary of what is a general process in the grammars of natural languages. Given these rules, the derivation of 'test', 'tests', and 'testing' in Black English is as follows:

Rule	test	tests	testing
underlying form	#test#	#test+z#	#test+ɨn#
1	#tes#	#tes+z#	(not applicable)
2	(not applicable)	#tes+ɨz#	(not applicable)
3	[tɛs]	[tɛsɨz]	[tɛstɨn]

The crucial factor in the application of the above rules is the ordering of Rules 1 and 2. A vowel-initial suffix must be present when the consonant-cluster deletion rule takes effect in 'testing', but not in the derivation of 'tests'. This result is achieved by allowing epenthesis to apply after cluster deletion. However, all the facts are accounted for only if the underlying form is recognized as including the stop member of the cluster. Again we see that the conventional spelling is the correct one for Black English.[24]

But there are a number of Black English speakers for whom the above rules are not appropriate. Some speakers pronounce the above three forms as [tɛs], [tɛsɨz] and [tɛsn̩], respectively. For these speakers, there is no reason to set up underlying forms which contain a final stop. That is, the underlying form for 'test' is)tes(. As a result, the correct spelling would be tes, and the conventional spelling test is anomalous.[24]

The problem for the educator then is to identify which speakers fail to have the standard underlying form for these words. It is very easy to determine this by means of a short diagnostic test.

With a few marginal exceptions, there is no reason to develop a special orthography just for Black English speakers. Because of the possible lack of certain crucial lexical items in the vocabularies of children in general, it may prove advisable to use some sort of modified orthography in teaching all young children to read. But in the main, conventional English orthography is as adequate for Black English speakers as it is for Standard English speakers.[25]

We suggest that reading be taught to Black English speakers in three stages. At the first stage, reading passages would be contolled so as to include only words whose abstract and surface representations and conventional spellings are largely the same. This would mean that most of the words would be monosyllabic words without radically different morphemic alternants. At this stage, the reader learns the principles of sound-symbol association. At the next stage, correct and conventional spellings which do not match the phonetics of the words as pronounced would be introduced. These words should be chosen so as to be only words for which the children are likely to know the relevant morphemic alternants. They would be introduced without apology for their failure to conform to surface pronunciation. Theoretically, this stage should be completely unobtrusive to the pupil, but this remains to be seen. The final stage would involve the introduction of words whose conventional spellings are not correct, but only after the basic reading and spelling principles have been firmly established.

Although our view of spelling correctness and the nature of the reading process in its beginning stages leads us to the conclusion that there should be no special difficulties for Black English speakers in reading caused by the way words are spelled, this definitely does not mean that there is no problem and that there is no necessity for teachers to make special adjustments in teaching reading to Black English speakers. The adjustments must come in teacher-training and teacher behavior in the classroom. Teachers must be brought to the realization of two important facts. First, the teaching of reading and the teaching of spoken Standard English are two completely different jobs. Second, the correct way to pronounce certain spellings in Black English is not the same as the correct way to pronounce them in Standard English. A good example is the word 'test', which we have just discussed. Even for those Black speakers for whom the correct spelling is test, the correct pronunciation is [tɛs].

A child who reads *test* is [tɛs] should be praised for his complete mastery of the reading process, not condemned for "leaving out the *t*". The practice of condemning Black English speaking children when they correctly read words in their dialect can do considerable harm.

An illustration of the effect of this kind of teaching from the point of view of a speaker of Standard English might be instructive. The word 'basically' is spelled *basically* but pronounced [beysɨkliy]. There is a phonological rule in English to delete the underlying)æl(in this environment. Therefore the Standard English speaking child who knows how to read, reads the spelling *basically* correctly as [beysɨkliy]. Since his teacher speaks the same dialect as he does, he is not likely to be contradicted in this pronunciation. But suppose he were to be told that he has made a mistake in reading this word because he left out the letters *al* and that he should have read [beysɨkæliy]. In addition, he is made to feel foolish because he has failed to react to two letters which are clearly present on the printed page. Yet, he knows full well that [beysɨkæliy] is not the correct pronunciation, because it does not conform to his knowledge of English, nor do people around him pronounce the word in this way. As a result, he doubts an important principle of reading, which he is beginning to learn, namely, that words can be identified by spelling which reflects their underlying representation and should be pronounced according to the ordinary rules of English phonology.

If the child were consistently corrected in this way, he might learn a different principle of reading. This new principle would be that words are indeed identified by their spellings which reflect underlying forms, but that oral reading is unlike speaking in that one suspends certain rules in English phonology so as to make surface pronunciation of words more closely approximate their underlying forms. The introduction of this complication would be pointless, but if the child were to be consistently corrected in this way, he could still learn to read.

The problem for the Black English speaking child is that the corrections he receives are *not* consistent. When he reads *basically* as [beysɨkliy], his reading is acceptable, reinforcing the correct principle of reading. But when he is told that [tɛst] rather than [tɛs] is the correct way to read *test*, the above spurious principle of oral reading is reinforced. Not being a speaker of Standard English, he has no way of knowing why some words are to be read according to one principle and others according to another. As a result, the child is likely to conclude that there is actually no principle at all. Since there is no way to determine the relationship between written symbols and their pronunciation, wild guessing is the only way to seek the teacher's approval. Since wild guessing so rarely produces the desired approval, complete despair may well be the next step.

This difficulty can be overcome by training teachers in Black English pronunciations so that they will consistently accept words that are correctly read according to the rules of Black English phonology. This means that [wɪf] is a correct reading for *with*, [bɪ:t] is the right way to read *bid* and that *test* is properly read as [tɛs].[26]

An accurate understanding of orthography is obviously not the whole answer to the problem of teaching reading to inner-city Negro children. The problems of education in the inner-city are too intricately involved with issues of social injustice and deprivation to yield to a single solution. Nevertheless, an understanding of the relationship of spelling to speaking is crucial in our attempts to improve reading instruction for inner-city children.

NOTES

1. For examples of these arguments, see Noam A. Chomsky, *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, (The Hague: Mouton, 1964), and Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle, "Some Controversial Questions in Phonological Theory", *Journal of Linguistics* 1 (1965) p. 97-138.

2. Even this is not quite right, since the first *t* represents a segment which need only be partially specified.

3. Richard Stanley, "Redundancy Rules in Phonology", *Language* 43 (1967) p. 393-436. Stanley's proposal is adopted by Chomsky and Halle as an "interim solution"; see Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle, *The Sound Pattern of English* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 385-389. Objection to the phonemic spelling principle is not limited to generative phonologists, however. See, for example, Martin Joos, Review of Axel Wijk, *Regularized English* in *Language* 36 (1960) p. 250-262, and Henry Lee Smith, Jr., "The Concept of the Morphophone", *Language* 43 (1967) p. 318-322.

4. This suggestion will have to be refined somewhat. One such refinement seems to be that the application of certain low-level optional phonological rules will have to be reflected in the orthography. Thus we find contraction indicated in the spelling *He's (here)*, *I've (got it)* and *doesn't*. In places where Black English has such optional rules which are missing in Standard English, this may mean that the apostrophe should be used in Black English where it is not used in Standard English. Certain manifestations of the '-ed' suffix may be deleted by an optional low-level rule in Black English. This may mean that the Black English sentence [yɛstɨdey hiy kʌs ælbɨt awt] should be written *Yesterday, he cuss' Albert out*.

5. These arguments appear in Chomsky and Halle, *op. cit.*, *passim*, but see especially p. 3-55.

6. Words like 'put' and 'cushion' are true exceptions to this generalization. That is, each such lexical entry must be marked as exempt from the rules which govern the complementary distribution.

7. See Chomsky and Halle, *op. cit.*, p. 203-205, for the details of this argument.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 46-47.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

10. Those who teach reading by the "whole word" method expect the reader to associate the printed word with the spoken word by the general configuration of the written word rather than by relating letters to phonological segments. The implicit assumption of this method is that English is written like Chinese and that the writing system has morphological and not phonological reference. As a matter of fact, English is *not* written in this way, but that in itself is no reason to assume that people cannot successfully learn to read as if it were.

11. Carl Lefevre, *Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964) p. 73.

12. We assume that reading with this interpretation will be easier for the straightforward reason that English writing clearly *does* refer to the phonological structure of words.

13. As Chomsky and Halle point out, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

14. I had the experience of working in a ghetto tutoring program in which a well-meaning teacher often greeted the utterance of a distinctively Black English sentence by the children with the remark, "Now say it in English". The remark was invariably met with bewildered silence. The point is that the youngsters did not know the "English" she was referring to and she assumed they did.

15. *Op. cit.*, p. 54.

16. William A. Stewart, "Sociolinguistic Factors in the History of American Negro Dialects", *Florida FL Reporter* Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring 1967).

17. William A. Stewart, "Foreign Language Teaching Methods in Quasi-Foreign Language Situations", in William A. Stewart (ed.) *Non-Standard Speech and the Teaching of English* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1964), p. 1-14.

18. Walter A. Wolfram, *A Sociolinguistic Description of Detroit Negro Speech* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, to appear).

19. William Labov, "Contraction, Deletion and Inherent Variability of the English Copula" (New York: mimeographed, 1968).

20. There may be a small minority of Black English speakers who do not have the systematic variation between [θ] and [f]. But even these speakers have the variation between [f] and [t]. For these speakers, the conventional spelling th in with is correct, although it may not be for tooth.

    We have said nothing about [ð] and [v]. Many of the arguments which apply to [f] and [θ] also apply to their voiced counterparts, although the situation is a little less clear.

21. For discussion of this point, see Wolfram, op. cit.

22. This is a special case of a more general matter involving final clusters of continuant plus stop in which the voicing of both members is the same.

23. It turns out that these actually are the plural forms of these words for many English speakers of both races and of all social classes.

24. This argument is essentially that given in William Labov, "A Study of the Non-Standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City, Volume I: Phonological and Grammatical Analysis", Final Report, Cooperative Research Project No. 3288 (New York: Columbia University [1968]), p. 131-133; cf. also Labov's addition to the text of his article "Some Sources of Reading Problems for Negro Speakers of Nonstandard English" as reprinted in this volume, especially pages 49-50.

25. These examples might lead the reader to the conclusion that we are deriving Black English forms from their Standard English counterparts. However, this is not the case. The Black English pronunciations are being derived from Black English underlying phonological forms which happen to resemble Standard English pronunciations. But the evidence for positing the Black English underlying forms comes entirely from within the dialect itself.

26. This procedure has been suggested in Kenneth S. Goodman's article "Dialect Barriers to Reading Comprehension", reprinted in this volume (see pages 14-28).

TEACHING READING IN AN URBAN NEGRO SCHOOL SYSTEM

by Joan C. Baratz

The inner-city Negro child is failing in our schools. His inability to read is a major challenge to contemporary educators because of its relationship to the child's self-esteem and his ultimate social effectiveness.

Failure to acquire functionally adequate reading skills not only contributes to alienation from the school as a social institution (and therefore encourages dropping out), but it goes on to insure failure in mainstream job success. There is certainly a relationship between reading success or failure on the one hand, and receptivity to or alienation from the society in which those reading skills are highly valued (Labov and Robins, 1967). It is almost impossible to underestimate the chain of reactions which can be touched off by early and continued educational failure which so many disadvantaged Negro children experience in even the most well-intentioned schools. Because the educational system has been ineffective in coping with teaching inner-city children to read, it treats reading failure (in terms of grading, ranking, etc.) as if this failure were due to intellectual deficits of the child rather than to methodological inadequacies in teaching procedures. Thus the system is unable to teach the child to read, but very quickly teaches him to regard himself as intellectually inadequate, and therefore, of low self-worth and low social value.

Despite the enormous expenditure of energy in remedial reading programs, children in the ghetto are still not learning to read (National Advisory Council on Education of the Disadvantaged, 1966). Although the difficulties of teaching reading to a portion of the population is a unique problem for the United States, the problem itself is not unique. The parallels are quite clear between the difficulty we are experiencing in teaching reading to the disadvantaged Negro child with those of emergent countries which are attempting to make a multi-cultured population literate in a single national tongue.

In his recent report on the Washington, D.C. School System, Passow (1967) indicated that the central question that must be answered is: "What are the educationally relevant differences which the District's pupils bring into the classroom and what kinds of varied educational experiences must be provided by the schools to accommodate these differences?" One major educationally relevant difference for Washington, D.C., as for ghettos across the nation, is that of language. The Negro ghetto child is speaking a significantly different language from that of his middle-class teachers. Most of his middle-class teachers have wrongly viewed his language as pathological, disordered, "lazy speech". This failure to recognize the interference from the child's different linguistic system, and consequent negative teacher attitudes towards the child and his language, lead directly to reading difficulties and subsequent school failure. Understanding that the inner-city child speaks a language that is well-ordered, but different in many respects from standard English, is crucial to understanding how to educate him. Unfortunately, there is a tendency for the educator to think of the black child with his non-standard speech as a "verbal cripple" whose restricted language leads to, or is caused by, cognitive deficits.

If we look briefly at the research and research assumptions concerning the language of Negro children, we can see how this erroneous notion of verbal inadequacy evolved.

When reviewing the literature, one finds three major professions concerned with describing the language and cognitive abilities of black children: educators, psychologists (mainly child development specialists), and linguists. The educators were the first to contribute a statement about the language difficulties of these children -- a statement that amounted to the assertion that these children were virtually verbally destitute, i.e. they couldn't talk, and if they did, it was deviant speech, filled with "errors". The next group to get into the foray -- the psychologists -- reconfirmed initially that the children didn't talk, and then added the sophisticated wrinkle that if they did talk, their speech was such that it was a deterrent to cognitive growth. The last group to come into the picture were the linguists, who, though thoroughly impressed with the sophisticated research of the psychologist, were astonished at the naïveté of his pronouncements concerning language. The linguist began to examine the language of black children and brought us to our current conceptions of the language abilities of these children, namely, that they speak a well-ordered, highly structured, highly developed language system which in many aspects is different from standard English.

We have a fascinating situation here where three professions are assessing the same behavior -- the child's oral language production and comprehension -- but with varying assumptions, so that they see different things. However, it is not merely another example of the parable of the six blind men describing the elephant and asserting that an elephant equaled that portion of the elephant that the blind man happened to be touching -- for in the parable all men were partially correct, and an elephant could be adequately described in the sum total of their "observations". But when we look at the assumptions of the educator, the psychologist, and the linguist, we find that there are actually some premises held by one profession, e.g. the psychologists' view that a language system could be underdeveloped, that another profession sees as completely untenable, e.g. linguists, who consider such a view of language so absurd as to make them feel that nobody could possibly believe it and therefore to refute it would be a great waste of time. The educator worked under the assumption that there is a single correct way of speaking and that everyone who does not speak in this "grammar book" fashion is in error. (Indeed, although the psychologist may not recognize it, he tacitly adheres to this principle when he defines language development in terms of "correct" standard English usage.) This assumption is also untenable to the linguist, who is interested in the structure and function of an utterance. To him the discussion of a hierarchial system that says that a double negative, e.g. they don' have none, is inferior to a single negative, e.g. they haven't any, is meaningless. The linguist simply wishes to describe the rules of the system that allow a speaker of that system to generate a negative utterance -- or any other complex structure -- that is considered grammatical and is understood as intended, by the speakers of the system.

The linguist takes it as basic that all humans develop language -- after all, there is no reason to assume that black African bush children develop a language and black inner-city Harlem children do not! Subsumed under this is that the language is a well-ordered system with a predictable sound pattern, grammatical structure and vocabulary (in this sense, there are no "primitive" languages). The linguist assumes that any verbal system used by a community that fulfills the above requirements is a language and that no language is structurally better than any other language, i.e. French is not better than German, Yiddish is not better than Gaelic, Oxford English is not better than standard English, etc. The second assumption of the linguist is that children learn language in the context of their environment -- that is to say, a French child learns French not because his father is in the home or his mother reads him books, but because that is the language that he hears continually from whatever source and that is the language that individuals in his environment respond to. The third assumption that the linguist works with is that by the time a child is five he has developed language -- he has learned the rules of his linguistic environment.

What are those rules and how have they been determined? By using ghetto informants, linguists such as Stewart (1964, 1965, 1967, 1968), Dillard (1966, 1967), Bailey (1965, 1968), Labov (1967), Loman (1967) and Shuy, Wolfram and Riley (1968) have described some of the linguistic parameters of Negro non-standard English. Differences between standard English and Negro non-standard occur to varying degrees in regard to the sound system, grammar and vocabulary.

Although Negro non-standard has many phonemes similar to those of standard English, the distribution of these phonemes varies from standard English. For example, /i/ and /e/ may not be distinguished before nasals, so that a "pin" in Negro non-standard may be either an instrument for writing a letter or something one uses to fasten a baby's diaper. Sounds such as 'r' and 'l' are distributed so that 'cat' may mean that orange vegetable that one puts in salads -- standard English *carrot* -- as well as the four-legged fuzzy animal, or a "big black dude". The reduction of /l/ and /r/ in many positions may create such homonyms as "toe" meaning a digit on the foot, or the church bell sound -- standard English toll. Final clusters are reduced in Negro non-standard so that "bowl" is used to describe either a vessel for cereal or a very brave soldier -- standard English bold.

These are but a few of the many instances where Negro non-standard sound usage differs from standard English. It is no wonder then, that Cynthia Deutsch (1964) should find in her assessment of auditory discrimination that disadvantaged black children did not "discriminate" as well as white children from middle-class linguistic environments. She administered a discrimination task that equated "correct responses" with judgments of equivalences and differences in standard English sound usage. Many of her stimuli, though different for the standard English speaker, e.g. pin-pen, are similar for the Negro non-standard speaker. She attributed the difference in performance of disadvantaged children to such things as the constant blare of the television in their homes and there being so much "noise" in their environment that the children tended to "tune out". However, black children make responses based on the kind of language they consider appropriate. In the same way that cot (for sleeping), caught (for ensnared); or marry (to wed), Mary (the girl), and merry (to be happy) are not distinguished in the speech of many white people (so that they would say on an auditory discrimination test that cot and caught were the same), pin and pen are the same in the language of ghetto blacks. The responses that the black child makes are on the basis of the sound usage that he has learned in his social and geographical milieu, and do not reflect some difficulty in discriminating.

The syntax of low-income Negro children also differs from standard English in many ways (unfortunately the psychologist, not knowing the rules of Negro non-standard has interpreted these differences not as the result of well-learned rules, but as evidence of "linguistic underdevelopment"). Some examples of the differences are provided below:

1. When you have a numerical quantifier such as 2, 7, 50, etc., you don't have to add the obligatory morphemes for the plural, e.g. *50 cent*; *2 foot*.
2. The use of the possessive marker is different. For example, the standard English speaker says "John's cousin"; the non-standard Negro speaker says *John cousin*. The possessive is marked here by the contiguous relationship of *John* and *cousin*.
3. The third person singular has no obligatory morphological ending in non-standard, so that "she works here" is expressed as *she work here* in Negro non-standard.
4. Verb agreement differs, so that one says *she have a bike*, *they was going*.
5. The use of the copula is not obligatory -- *I going*; *he a bad boy*.
6. The rules for negation are different. The double negative is used: standard English "I don't have any" becomes *I don' got none* in Negro non-standard.
7. The use of "ain't" in expression of the past -- Negro non-standard present tense is *he don't go*, past tense is *he ain't go*.
8. The use of "be" to express habitual action -- *he working right now* as contrasted with *he be working every day*.

These are just a few of the rules that the non-standard speaker employs to produce utterances that are grammatical for other speakers in his environment.

Baratz and Povich (1967) assessed the language development of a group of five-year-old black Head Start children.

They analyzed speech responses to photographs and to CAT cards, using Lee's (1967) developmental sentence types model. A comparison of their data and Menyuk's (1964) restricted and transformational types of white middle-class children was performed. Results indicated that the Negro Head Start child is not delayed in language acquisition -- the majority of his utterances are on the kernel and transformational levels of Lee's developmental model. His transformational utterances are similar to those appearing above -- he has learned the many complicated structures of Negro non-standard English.

But how did the psychologist manage to come to the erroneous conclusion that the black child has an insufficient or underdeveloped linguistic system? The psychologist's basic problem was that his measures of "language development" were measures based on standard English (Bereiter, 1965; Thomas, 1964; Deutsch, 1964; Klaus and Gray, 1968). From these he concluded that since black children do not speak standard English, they must be deficient in language development.

Despite the misconceptions of the educator and psychologist concerning language and linguistic competence, the linguists for their part have described the differences between Negro non-standard and standard English in some detail. The following is a list of some of the syntactic differences between the two systems:

Variable	Standard English	Negro Non-Standard
Linking verb	He is going.	He __ goin'.
Possessive marker	John's cousin.	John_ cousin.
Plural marker	I have five cents.	I got five cent_.
Subject expression	John_lives in New York.	John he live in New York.
Verb form	I drank the milk.	I drunk the milk.
Past marker	Yesterday he walked home.	Yesterday he walk_ home.

Verb agreement	He runs home.	He run_ home.
	She has a bicycle.	She have a bicycle.
Future form	I will go home.	I'ma go home.
"If" construction	I asked if he did it.	I ask did he do it.
Negation	I don't have any.	I don't got none.
	He didn't go.	He ain't go.
Indefinite article	I want an apple.	I want a apple.
Pronoun form	We have to do it.	Us got to do it.
	His book.	He book.
Preposition	He is over at his friend's house.	He over to his friend house.
	He teaches at Francis Pool.	He teach _ Francis Pool.
Be	Statement: He is here all the time.	Statement: He be here.
Do	Contradiction: No, he isn't.	Contradiction: No, he don't.

But what of these differences? All the linguists studying Negro non-standard English agree that these differences are systematized structured rules within the vernacular; they agree that these differences can interfere with the learning of standard English, but they do not always agree as to the precise nature of these different rules. This leads to varied disagreements as to why a particular feature exists (i.e. phoneme deletion vs. creolization), but it does not dispute the fact that the linguistic feature is present. No one would fail to agree that standard English has a grammatical structure and uniqueness, and many descriptions of that structure have been written. Yet it is probably true that no two linguists would agree in all details on how to write the grammar. This equally explains the current controversy among linguists as to how one writes the grammar of Negro non-standard English.

This language difference, not deficiency, must be considered in the educational process of the black ghetto child. In 1953, the UNESCO report regarding the role of language in education stated that: "It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar medium."

Since 1953, studies implementing the recommendations of the UNESCO report have clearly illustrated the importance of considering the vernacular in teaching reading in the national language (Modiano, 1965). It seems clear that a structural knowledge of non-standard vernacular and the ways it can interfere with learning to speak and read standard English are indispensable to teaching ghetto Negro children. Goodman (1965) and Bailey (1965), along with Stewart, have all discussed the possibility of interference from the dialect on acquiring the ability to read. Labov (1967) has also stressed that the "ignorance of standard English rules on the part of the speakers of standard English" and the "ignorance of non-standard English rules on the part of teachers and text writers" may well be the cause for the reading failures that occur in the schools. In addition, Wiener and Cromer (1967) in their article on reading and reading difficulty discussed the need to determine the relationship between language differences and reading problems, because a failure to be explicit about the relationship between reading and previously acquired auditory language often leads to ambiguities as to whether a particular difficulty is a reading problem, language problem, or both.

But does the black non-standard speaker have to contend with interference from his own dialect on his performance in standard English? The following experiment clearly suggests that he does.

The subjects in this experiment were third and fifth graders from two schools in the Washington, D.C. area. One was an inner-city, impact-aid school; all the children in this school were Negroes. The other was a school in Maryland, located in an integrated low-middle-income community; all the children from that school were white.

	Negro	White	Total
Third Grade	15	15	30
Fifth Grade	15	15	30
	30	30	60

A sentence repetition test was constructed that contained 30 sentences, 15 in standard English and 15 in Negro nonstandard. The sentences were presented on tape to each subject, who was asked to repeat the sentence after hearing it once. Two random orders of the sentences were constructed to control for an order effect. The sentences were as follows:

1. That girl, she ain' go ta school 'cause she ain' got no clothes to wear.
2. John give me two books for me to take back the liberry 'cause dey overdue.
3. I's some toys out chere and the chil'run they don' wanna play wid dem no more.
4. Does Deborah like to play with the girl that sits next to her in school?
5. The teacher give him a note 'bout de school meetin' an he 'posed to give it ta his mother to read.
6. John he always be late for school 'cause he don't like ta go music class.
7. My aunt who lives in Baltimore used to come to visit us on Sunday afternoons.
8. Do Deborah like to play wid da girl that sit next to her at school?

9. I asked Tom if he wanted to go to the picture that was playing at the Howard.

10. John gave me two books to take to the library because they were overdue.

11. Can Michael make the boat by hisself or do we gotta he'p him do it?

12. Henry lives near the ball park but can't go to the games because he has no money.

13. Where Mary brovah goin' wif a raggedy umbrella and a old blue raincoat?

14. There are some toys out here that the children don't want to play with any more.

15. If I give you three dollars will you buy me the things that I need to make the wagon?

16. When the teacher asked if he had done his homework, Henry said, "I didn't do it."

17. I aks Tom do he wanna go to the picture that be playin' at the Howard.

18. Henry live beside the ball park but he can't go to the games 'cause he ain' got no money.

19. The teacher gave him a note about the school meeting to give to his mother.

20. She was the girl who didn't go to school because she had no clothes to wear.

21. John is always late to school because he doesn't like to go to music class.

22. Patricia sits in the front row so that she can hear everything the teacher says.

23. If I give you three dollar you gonna buy what I need to make the wagon?

24. When the teachah aks Henry did he do his homework, Henry say I ain't did it.

25. My aunt, she live in Baltimore, and she useda come visit us Sunday afternoon.

26. Gloria's friend is working as a waitress in the Hot Shoppes on Connecticut Avenue.

27. Can Michael build the boat all by himself or should we help him with some of the work?

28. Where is Mary's brother going with a raggedy umbrella and an old blue raincoat?
29. Patricia all the time be sittin' in the front row so she can hear everything the teacher say.
30. Gloria frien', she a waitress, she be working the Hot Shoppes on Connecticut Avenue.

Each subject was asked to repeat exactly what he heard as best he could. After the subject had responded to all the stimuli on the tape, he was asked to listen to two stimuli, one in standard English and the other in non-standard English. After each of these stimuli, the subject was asked to identify who was speaking from among a group of pictures containing Negro and white men, women, boys and girls, and an Oriental girl.

The data were analyzed to ascertain what happened to the following constructions:

Standard Constructions	Non-standard Constructions
Third person singular	Non-addition of third person -s
Presence of copula	Zero copula
Negation	Double negation; and "ain't"
If + subject + verb	Zero "if" + verb + subject
Past markers	Zero past morpheme
Possessive marker	Zero possessive morpheme
Plural	Use of "be"

1. Analysis of variance on repetition of standard constructions.

The data concerning repetition of the seven standard constructions were subjected to a Winer (1962) multifactor repeated measures analysis of variance (Table 1). The factors under study were: A, race -- Negro vs. white performance; B, age -- third graders vs. fifth graders; and C, grammatical feature -- the seven standard constructions listed above. The analysis of variance indicated that race, grammatical feature and the interaction of race and grammatical feature were significant beyond the .001 level. The interaction of age and grammatical feature was significant at the .05 level.

Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Standard English Sentences

	ss	df	ms	f
Between subjects				
A	128.48	1	128.48	285.51*
B	.09	1	.09	.20
A x B	1.00	1	1.00	2.22
Subjects within groups	25.22	56	.45	
Within subjects				
C	69.98	6	11.66	31.61*
A x C	39.49	6	6.58	21.23*
B x C	4.46	6	.74	2.39**
A x B x C	2.51	6	.41	1.32
C x subjects within groups	103.74	336	.31	
Total	374.97	419		

* Significant beyond .001 level
** Significant at the .05 level

White subjects were significantly better than Negro subjects in repeating standard English sentences. A Scheffé test (Edwards, 1962) for multiple comparisons of factor C, grammatical features, indicated that most of the significant variance could be ascribed to the differential performance of subjects on the "if" construction. In addition, the plural feature was significantly more accurate than the third person singular and the possessive. The significant A x C interaction, race and grammatical feature, was most readily explained by the significant difference between Negro and white performance on the following grammatical categories: third person singular, copula, "if" construction, and negation. The B x C interaction, age and grammatical feature, was mostly due to the significant difference in performance at grade three and grade five of the "if" construction and the plural marker (Table 2).

2. Analysis of variance on repetition of non-standard constructions.

The data concerning repetition of the seven non-standard constructions were subjected to a Winer multifactor repeated measures analysis of variance (Table 3). The factors under study were the same as those in the previous analysis of variance: A, race; B, age; and C, grammatical feature. The analysis of variance indicated that race, grammatical feature, and the interaction of race and grammatical feature were all significant beyond the .001 level.

Negro subjects did significantly better than white subjects in repeating Negro non-standard sentences. A Scheffé test for multiple comparisons of factor C, grammatical features, indicated that most of the significant variance could be ascribed to the differential performance of subjects on the "if" construction. The significant A x C interaction, race and grammatical feature, was most readily explained by the differential performance of Negro and white subjects on the "if" and the double negative constructions (Table 4).

3. Identification of race of the speaker.

Of the third graders, 73.3% identified the standard sentence as being spoken by a white man, and 73.3 identified

Table 2

Scheffé Results of Standard English Sentences Analysis

Factor C

Third person	"To be"	"If"	Past Marker	Possessive	Plural	Negation
143.40	155.67	76.65	152.67	140.07	167.96	152.67

Third person is significantly different from the plural and the possessive at the .05 level. The "if" construction is significantly different from all other constructions at the .05 level.

Factor A x C

	Third person	"To be"	"If"	Past Marker	Possessive	Plural	Negation
Negro	51.00	65.88	6.33	69.21	66.30	77.14	54.90
White	92.40	89.79	80.32	89.79	48.44	90.82	85.17

Performance of Negro and white students was significantly different on the third person, "to be", "if", and negation constructions at the .05 level.

Factor B x C

	Third person	"To be"	"If"	Past Marker	Possessive	Plural	Negation
Grade 3	72.46	76.73	39.55	74.60	82.39	86.11	65.63
Grade 5	70.94	78.94	47.10	78.07	72.35	81.85	74.44

Performance of third and fifth graders on the "if" construction was significantly different from their performance on the plural and the possessive

Table 3

Analysis of Variance of Negro Non-Standard Sentences

	ss	df	ms	f
Between subjects				
A	73.20	1	73.20	66.55*
B	.53	1	.53	.48
A x B	.01	1	.01	.009
Subjects within groups	61.63	56	1.10	
Within subjects				
C	44.34	6	7.39	13.19*
A x C	39.49	6	6.58	11.75*
B x C	.82	6	.14	.25
A x B x C	3.42	6	.57	1.02
C x subjects within groups	188.83	336	.56	
Total	412.27	419		

* Significant beyond the .001 level

Table 4

Scheffé Results of Negro Non-Standard English Sentences Analysis

Factor C

Third person	Be	Zero Copula	"If"	Past Marker	Double Negative	Possessive
86.79	54.48	106.61	109.30	80.93	109.57	73.06

The use of "Be" was significantly different from performance in regard to the zero copula, the third person singular, the "if" construction and the double negative.

Factor A x C

	Third person	Be	Zero Copula	"If"	Past Marker	Double Negative	Possessive
Negro	52.88	35.27	57.16	87.87	53.39	67.90	42.57
White	33.91	19.21	49.45	21.43	26.54	31.67	30.49

Most of the significance was due to the difference in performance between Negro and white students on the double negative and on the "if" constructions.

the non-standard sentence as being spoken by a Negro. Of the fifth graders, 83.3% judged the standard sentence as being spoken by a white man, while 93.3% judged the non-standard sentence as being spoken by a Negro. Eighty percent of the white children and 76.6% of the Negro children identified standard sentences as being spoken by a white man. Non-standard sentences were judged to be spoken by a Negro 83.3% of the time by both Negro and white children.

In responding to standard English sentences, white speakers did significantly better than black speakers. However, in examining the black child's "errors", it became evident that he didn't fail utterly to complete the sentence; he didn't jumble his response, nor did he use a "word salad". His "error" responses were consistent, e.g. in response to the stimulus: "I asked Tom if he wanted to go to the picture that was playing at the Howard", 97% of the children responded with: "I aks Tom did he wanna go to the picture at the Howard". In response to: "Does Deborah like to play with the girl that sits next to her in school", 60% of the Negro children responded: "Do Deborah like to play wif the girl what sit next to her in school".

This same behavior was evident in the white subjects when asked to repeat Negro non-standard sentences. Black children were superior to white children in repeating these stimuli. Here again the "error" responses followed a definite pattern, e.g. in response to the stimulus: "I aks Tom do he wanna go to the picture that be playin' at the Howard", 78% of the white children said: "I asked Tom if he wanted to go to the picture that was playing at the Howard". Similar "translations" to standard English occurred on the other Negro non-standard constructions.

The fact that the standard and non-standard speakers exhibited similar "translation" behaviors when confronted with sentences that were outside of their primary code indicates quite clearly that the "language deficiency" that has so often been attributed to the low-income Negro child is not a language deficit so much as a difficulty in code switching when the second code (standard English) is not as well learned as the first (non-standard English).

The kinds of "errors" the two groups made (e.g. white subjects adding the third person -s to non-standard stimuli and Negroes deleting the third person -s on standard stimuli) represent an intrusion of one language code (the dominant system) upon the structure of the other code (the newly-acquired system). If, indeed, non-standard were not a structured system with well-ordered rules, one would expect that Negro children would not be able to repeat the non-standard structures any better than did the white children, and one would also expect that non-standard patterns would not emerge systematically when lower-class Negroes responded to standard sentences. Neither of these expectations was upheld. The Negro children were in fact able to repeat non-standard structures better than were the white children, and they did produce systematic non-standard patterns when responding to standard sentences. The converse was true for the whites; they responded significantly better to standard structures and exhibited systematic standard patterns when responding to non-standard stimuli.

The results of this research clearly indicate that (1) there are two dialects involved in the education complex of black children (especially in schools with a white middle-class curriculum orientation); (2) black children are generally not bi-dialectal; and (3) there is evidence of interference from their dialect when black children attempt to use standard English.

Since the disadvantaged Negro child, as the previous study suggests, like the Indian having to learn Spanish in Mexico, or the African having to learn French in Guinea, has to contend with the interference from his vernacular in learning to read, how does his task of learning to read differ from that of the middle-class "mainstream American" child? When the middle-class child starts the process of learning to read, his is primarily a problem of decoding the graphic representation of a language which he already speaks. The disadvantaged black child must not only decode the written words, he must also "translate" them into his own language. This presents him with an almost insurmountable obstacle, since the written words frequently do not go together in any pattern that is familiar or meaningful to him. He is baffled by this confrontation with (1) a new language with its new syntax; (2) a necessity to learn the meaning of graphic symbols; and (3) a vague, or not so vague, depending upon the cultural and linguistic sophistication of the teacher, sense that there is something terribly wrong with his language.

Although both the middle-class child and the disadvantaged Negro child are at the beginning faced with the task of relating their speech to a graphic representation that appears to be arbitrary and without a direct one-to-one correspondence to their speech (e.g. the "silent _e_" in _love_, the "silent _k_" in _knife_, the "k" as represented in _cut_ and _kite_, and the "s" as represented in _Sue_, _cement_, etc.), the cards are stacked against the inner-city Negro child because his particular phoneme patterning is not considered in the curriculum at this early phase, so that when he reads _hep_ for "help", _men'_ for "mend", _boil_ for "ball", the teacher presumes that he cannot read the word. _Hep_ and _help_, _men'_ and _mend_, and _boil_ and _ball_ are homonyms in the inner-city child's vernacular.

Despite the obvious mismatching of the "teachers and text writers" phoneme system and that of the inner-city child, the difficulties of the disadvantaged Negro child cannot be simplified solely to the pronunciation and phoneme differences that exist in the two systems. There is an even more serious problem facing the inner-city child, namely, his unfamiliarity with the syntax of the classroom texts. Although the middle-income child also must read texts that are at times stilted in terms of his own usage, there is no question that the language of the texts is potentially comparable to his system. That is to say, although he does not speak in the style of his reading text, he has the rules within his grammar to account for the occurrence of the textbook sentences. However, the textbook style is more unfamiliar to the ghetto child than it is to his middle-class standard-speaking age mate because much of the reading text is not a part of his "potential" syntactic system.

Because of the mismatch between the child's system and that of the standard English textbook, because of the psychological consequences of denying the existence and legitimacy of the child's linguistic system, and in the light of the success of vernacular teaching around the world, it appears imperative that we teach the inner-city Negro child to read using his own language as the basis for the initial readers. In other words, first teach the child to read in the vernacular, and then teach him to read in standard English. Such a reading program would not only require accurate vernacular texts for the dialect speaker, but also necessitate the creation of a series of "transition readers" that would move the child, once he had mastered reading in the vernacular, from vernacular texts to standard English texts. Of course, success of such a reading program would be dependent upon the child's ultimate ability to read standard English.

The advantages of such a program would be threefold. First, success in teaching the ghetto child to read. Second, the powerful ego-supports of giving credence to the child's language system and therefore to himself, and giving him the opportunity to experience success in school. And third, with the use of transitional readers, the child would have the opportunity of being taught standard English (which cannot occur by "linguistic swamping", since his school mates are all vernacular speakers) so that he could learn where his language system and that of standard English were similar and where they were different. Such an opportunity might well lead to generalized learning and the ability to use standard English more proficiently in other school work.

The continued failure of programs of reading for ghetto children that offer more of the same, i.e. more phonics, more word drills, etc., have indicated the need of a new orientation towards teaching inner-city children to read. Any such program must take into account what is unique about the ghetto child that is impairing his ability to learn within the present system. This paper has suggested that one of the essential differences to be dealt with in teaching inner-city Negro children is that of language. The overwhelming evidence of the role that language interference can play in reading failure indicates that perhaps one of the most effective ways to deal with the literacy problems of Negro ghetto youth is to teach them using vernacular texts that systematically move from the syntactic structures of the ghetto community to those of the standard English speaking community.

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A LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND FOR DEVELOPING BEGINNING READING MATERIALS FOR BLACK CHILDREN

by Roger W. Shuy

Morton Wiener and Ward Cromer, in their article "Reading and Reading Difficulty: A Conceptual Analysis", describe four different assumptions which are used to explain what is meant by the term "reading difficulty".[1] Each assumption implies a kind of built-in model of remediation. Some researchers, for example, assume that reading difficulty involves a kind of malfunction, usually of the sensory-physiological type. Other investigators feel that reading difficulty involves a deficiency of some sort which must be corrected before adequate reading can take place. Still others attribute reading difficulty to certain things (bad method, anxiety, etc.) which are present but interfering, and which must be removed before good reading can take place. A fourth approach to reading difficulty is one in which the researchers assume that the child would read adequately if the material and method were consistent with his linguistic behavior patterns. Investigators who work under this assumption believe that in order to make the child read, either the material or the behavior patterns must be changed.

This article is based on two papers delivered during the spring of 1968. The first was presented at the International Reading Association Pre-Convention Workshop on Psycholinguistics on April 24. The second was read at the Temple University Faculty Workshop in Reading Theory on May 8.

Let us pause to examine the urban Negro child's "reading difficulty" in the light of the Wiener-Cromer taxonomy of research assumptions. We would be hard-pressed to demonstrate that the urban Negro child generally has sensory of physiological defects, or that he lacks some function necessary to the reading process. Nor can we casually observe that the entire population of urban Negro children is made up of individuals who have intrapsychic conflicts. The reading difficulty seems, rather, to stem from a cultural difference characterized, among other things, by a different view of life's problems, a different style of self-presentation, and a different orientation to the printed page. It is almost as though the child "speaks another language", and in the case of the urban Negro child, this is very close to true.

The linguistic system of the ghetto Negro is different in a number of identifiable features from that of Standard English. If this non-standard dialect is interfering with the acquisition of Standard English reading skills, we can take at least two courses. One is to adjust the child to suit the materials. The other is to adjust the materials to suit the child. If the end result is successful it is a matter of indifference which system is used. Those who advocate that we teach the child Standard English before he learns to read assume that since it is a good thing to learn Standard English, he might as well learn it before he learns to read. Most linguists, on the other hand, realize that the complexity of language learning is such that this sort of engineering is too slow-moving to be effective. That is, the social value of learning Standard English is not worth the long delay it would cause in his learning to read. The simple truth is that speaking Standard English, however desirable it may be, is not as important as learning to read.

In any case, the idea of changing the child to suit the materials seems educationally naïve when one stops to give it careful consideration. The usual practice among educators has been to suit the materials to the child. But even assuming that it were desirable to first teach children Standard English, we have no research to show that children have any great conscious awareness of the fine distinctions of the social dimension of language. Of course they are quite able to use grammatical, phonological and lexical forms in keeping with their own value systems, but these value systems are those of the unsophisticated child, who just may value the speech of a juvenile delinquent, a dope peddler or an athlete who lisps more than the speech of a teacher, an announcer or a judge. Furthermore, pre-adolescent children are relatively unable to articulate what they are doing when they adopt someone's linguistic norms.[2] This is not surprising, since it is also difficult for adults, even language arts teachers, to identify these things. In her doctoral dissertation, Anne E. Hughes asked a random group of urban teachers of disadvantaged pre-school children to identify the language problems of their students.[3] The teachers were first asked to talk about the characteristic linguistic problems. Then they were asked to listen to a tape recording of some of these children and identify the linguistic problems on that tape. The results showed a very low correlation of response to reality.

Eighty percent of the teachers observed that their students have a limited vocabulary. One teacher offered the following reason for this "handicap":

> ...the children came with a very meager vocabulary...I think it's because of the background of the home and the lack of books at home, the lack of communication with the family, especially, if there are only one or two children in the family. Perhaps if there are more children in the family communication might be a bit better. They might have a few more words in their vocabulary.

Another teacher observed:

"In the inner-city, the child's vocabulary is very limited. His experiences are very limited."

These comments are typical. Neither teacher gave any indication that the home environment might produce a different vocabulary. Both felt, on the contrary, that a lack of school vocabulary was equivalent to a lack of overall vocabulary. This reflects a widely-held but erroneous concept, in which the disadvantaged child is sometimes called non-verbal. Nothing in the current research on Washington, D.C., or Detroit Negroes supports this idea. The notion that children in disadvantaged homes are the products of language deprivation seems to mean only that the investigators proved to be such a cultural barrier to the interviewee that informants were too frightened and awed to talk freely, or that the investigators simply asked the wrong questions.

If the teachers' comments about vocabulary were unsophisticated, their descriptions of their childrens' pronunciation and grammar were even worse. Thirteen percent of the teachers observed that some students can not talk at all when they come to school; many felt that these children could not hear certain sounds, apparently on the assumption that because a child does not relate his sound system to printed symbols, he cannot hear these sounds. One-third of the teachers characterized their childrens' greatest grammatical failure as their inability to speak in sentences or complete thoughts.

This research showed clearly that one of the most important aspects of language development among disadvantaged children centers on imprecise descriptions of the problem, large-scale ignorance of how to make an adequate description, and the interference of pedagogical folklore which passes as knowledge about a conspicuously neglected and underprivileged group of human beings.

The position of a Negro child in an urban ghetto is, then, that he has a functioning language system which does not necessarily match the language system of the school. Recent research on this problem, using sentence repetition experiments, clearly indicates that middle-class white children have as much difficulty repeating syntactical constructions commonly used by Washington, D.C., Negro children as the Negro children have in repeating the white middle-class syntactical forms.[4] The implications of this research point to a cultural mismatch between student and teaching materials.

The first major task for linguists is to describe and analyze this language system of the urban ghetto. In many ways it is similar to that of Standard English but in several very important ways it is quite different. It differs basically in two ways: (1) the presence of some feature not found in Standard English, or the absence of some feature found in Standard English; and (2) a frequency distribution of a feature which is significantly different from that of Standard English.

A quite romantic picture of the differences between Standard English and Black English would be to say that their grammars and phonological systems are entirely different. Current research in New York, Detroit and Washington, D.C., has shown that this would be a gross overstatement. If it were true, there would be little mutual understanding between speakers of the different dialects. There are, however, significant contrasts that are particularly evident when the verb systems of lower-class and working-class Negroes are compared with those of middle-class Negroes and with whites of all classes. The copula and auxiliary have been the most fruitful areas of study so far, particularly with regard to a feature which is present in one social group while absent in another.[5] There are many examples of frequency distribution differences between racial and/or social groups.[6] The most notable of these include recent studies of multiple negation, pronominal apposition, r-deletion, l-deletion, consonant-cluster reduction, devoicing of word-final stop consonants, among others.

The significance of this sort of research for beginning reading instruction is of two kinds, depending on whether the feature is phonological or grammatical.

Phonological features

A careful description of the phonology of Black English speakers will be of more use to teachers than to writers of classroom materials. The arbitrariness of the symbolization process makes it rather unnecessary to recast primers into graphemic series which delete the r in car (cah), the l in help (hep), which substitute voiceless stops for voiced ones in words like red (ret), and which show consonant-cluster reductions in words like just (jus) and send (sen). Urban disadvantaged Negroes should not find it difficult to discover that /jəs/ is realized in print as just. Their grapheme rule would be ⟨st⟩ → /s/ in final position. This is certainly no more unreasonable than other double grapheme relations as single sounds, such as ⟨th⟩ → /θ/ in thin or ⟨mb⟩ → /m/ in thumb. That is, the decoding process of reading is already imbued with such rules. One might also ask, however, how different the problem is for urban poor Negroes than for, say, middle-class whites. There is considerable evidence to show that in some oral styles, middle-class whites also reduce these consonant clusters, although not always as frequently as do Negroes.

In addition to cases in which the reduction of consonant clusters occurs similarly for urban poor Negroes and Standard English speakers, there are cases in which the non-standard Negro cluster reductions are different, depending on the surrounding sounds, from Standard English. For example, in

Standard English if a word ends in /st/ and the following word begins with /s/, the /st/ cluster is frequently reduced to /s/, as in /wesayd/ (west side). However, in non-standard the cluster may be reduced whether or not the following word begins with /s/, as in /wesindiyz/ (West Indies).

Also for other phonological features linguists can make good cases for the systematic nature of the disadvantaged Negro's decoding process. In Detroit, for example, whereas a middle-class white or Negro might decode ⟨time⟩ as /taym/, the ghetto Negro might realize it as a front vowel, with a different glide segment, /tæhm/. If the glide vowel is entirely absent, as it often is, the main vowel is usually lengthened, thus producing /tæ:m/. The rules[7] for these various realizations may be formulated as follows:

	Standard		Non-Standard
Rule S 1	⟨t⟩ → /t/	Rule NS 1	⟨t⟩ → /t/
S 2	⟨i...e⟩ → /ay/	NS 2	⟨i...e⟩ → /æ:/ ~ /æh/

Thus rules S 1 and NS 1 are identical. Rules S 2 and NS 2 have different correspondent features but the same number of correspondences. That is, ⟨i⟩ followed by a non-contiguous ⟨e⟩ marker yields a glide /ay/ in Standard English of the North, whereas here it yields either a different glide, /æh/, or /æ/ plus a vowel duration /:/ which may be said to replace or compensate for the loss of the glide vowel.

All of this is meant to indicate that there is nothing irregular about the phoneme-grapheme relationship of speakers of non-standard. The correspondences are quite similar in quantity but different in certain shapes. In terms of entire linguistic structures these differences are actually very slight. They gain in importance only as social groups assign values to them.

It is of utmost importance, however, that teachers be made aware of these systematic decoding processes. A child who decodes ⟨time⟩ as /tæ:m/ is not deficient in his ability to pronounce the glide vowel most frequently heard in Standard English. Nor is he misreading the word. Ironically, he is doing what any good reader ought to be doing -- taking printed symbols and translating them into his own meaningful oral symbols. It might be said, in fact, that learning to read has little or nothing to do with a child's ability to handle Standard English phonology. But it is tremendously important for the teacher to understand the child's phonological system in order to distinguish between reading difficulties and systematic features of the child's dialect. It is also important for the teacher to understand the child's phonological system in order to organize teaching materials into consistent groupings. For example, I once observed a teacher in a ghetto school tell beginning readers that the vowels of *fog*, *dog*, *hog*, and *log* were all the same. She then had the students repeat the words after her, thus: /fag/, /dɔg/, /hag/, /lɔg/. The students heard the difference. This teacher never did. Learning the -*og* matrix is meaningful pedagogy if there is consistency in the production of that matrix, /ɔ/ *or* /a/. Either pattern is useful to the beginning reader who is being taught on the basis of pattern.

Grammatical Features

If phonological considerations appear to be of no great consequence to the development of such materials, one might legitimately ask what importance to attach to grammatical considerations. In order to do this, we might do well to suggest some principles upon which such considerations can be based. Such principles can be expected to be broadly relevant for judging the effectiveness of such materials but they should also serve as judgment categories in reading generally, whether it be for non-standard readers, Standard readers, speed readers, literature readers, or readers of any other sort. Three such principles suggest themselves:

1. The grammatical choices should not provide extraneous data. In the case of beginning reading materials for non-standard speakers, the text should help the child by avoiding grammatical forms which are not realized by him in his spoken language (third singular verb inflections, for example).
2. The grammatical choices should provide adequate data. In the case of beginning reading materials for non-standard speakers, grammatical forms which occur in non-standard but not in Standard should be inserted where they appear natural (the be in "All the time he be happy", and the to in "Make him to do it", for example).
3. The grammatical choices should provide sequentially relevant data. In the case of beginning reading materials for non-standard speakers, syntactic constructions such as adverbial phrases should be reduced to their derivative nominalized forms where it is natural to do so in the dialect (the as a janitor in the sentence, "Samuel's brother is working as a janitor", for example, reduced to "Samuel brother, he a janitor".).

A basic difficulty at this point is that the reading theorists have not adequately defined just exactly what reading is and, consequently, what reading problems really are. This puts the linguist at a disadvantage. But even if we can't define reading, we can at least talk about some of its characteristics and perhaps discover how the interference of one grammatical system on another may contribute some problems therein.

If we are willing to say that some of the characteristics of reading include the reader's decoding certain graphic symbols for meaning with the aid of some unexplained help from his knowledge of semantic, phonological, and grammatical probabilities, and non-linguistic context, then we can precede along the following lines. It seems likely that these characteristics of the reading process may operate (here considerably oversimplified) according to the chart as shown in Fig. 1.

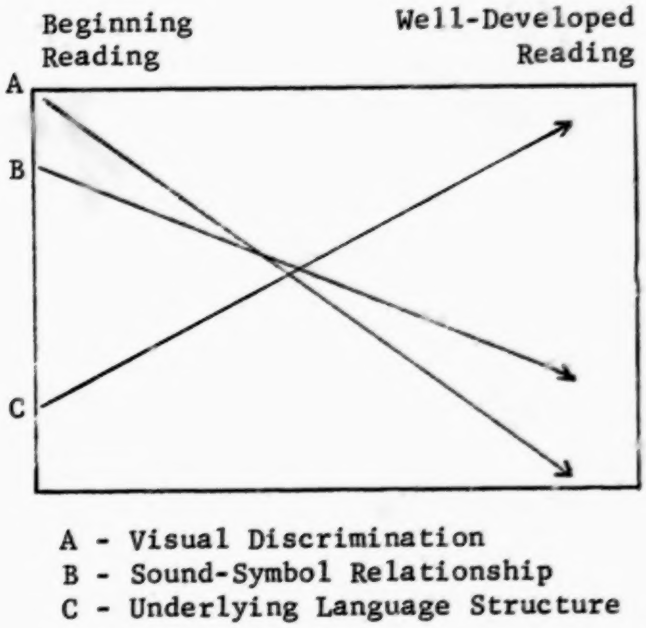
Beginning Reading
Well-Developed Reading
A
B
C
A - Visual Discrimination
B - Sound-Symbol Relationship
C - Underlying Language Structure

Fig. 1. Schematic Chart of the Child's Dependence on Some Characteristics of the Reading Process

If this schematization in any way reflects reality, it is obvious that the characteristics necessary for the beginning reader may be called upon in progressively different degrees as this child moves toward more mature reading abilities. That is, he must call on visual discrimination (A) and sound-symbol relationship (B) quite heavily at the beginning stages, and he must learn to rely on them less and less if he wants to read faster and better. His underlying language structure (C), however, though called upon throughout the reading process, is used increasingly as (A) and (B) diminish.

The importance of underlying language structure in the reading process cannot be overestimated and very little has been said about it in the literature of reading. By underlying language structure is meant that ability which even beginning readers have which enables them to avoid misreading via any manner other than by the phonological and grammatical rules of their native language. Thus they do not render cat as cta (an impossible phonological realization in English) although they quite possibly could realize it as cet or cep or any other sequence of sounds allowable in English. Such ability also prevents grammatical misreadings of sentences like The man chased the cat as The man the chase cated or Man the the chased cat. If the reader is going to err, he will err within the framework of possible variants in phonology and grammar -- although not necessarily within the framework of Standard English (e.g. The man done chased the cat). Some linguists maintain that a child has some innate capacity for language learning which accelerates such apparently learned characteristics; or, that underlying language structure characterizes all types of linguistic performance and that, in reading, a person perceives in relationship to such an underlying system. The blind can learn to read despite absent visual discrimination (A) and the deaf can become literate despite an absent sound-symbol relationship (B). The fact that many children learn to read in spite of the inadequacies of reading theory and teaching today may be a silent tribute to the magnificence of the human brain and the marvels of underlying language structure.

Certain kinds of supposed reading errors, then, can be said to result from differing performance realizations of similar underlying language structures. A child who reads He is John's friend as He John friend may be evidencing exactly the same linguistic sense of the writer, with only performance differences.

These realizations, and others like them, give rise to certain questions:

1. What kind of, and how much, interference is caused by the absence of non-standard grammatical features in Standard English texts?
2. What kind of, and how much, interference is caused by the presence in the text of Standard English grammatical features which are not used by non-standard speakers?
3. What kind of, and how much, interference is caused by syntactic variations between non-standard and Standard English features?

All of the above questions have to do with grammatical matters in which the underlying structures of Standard English and non-standard are equivalent but in which the surface realizations vary. It goes without saying that where both performance and the underlying structure fail to match or, worse yet, where performance is identical and where the underlying structures are not equivalent, there are bound to be reading problems.

It may turn out that there is no more to worry about in terms of potential cross-dialectal interference for many grammatical matters than there is to concern us with cross-dialectal interference in phonological features. In an effort to determine potential reading interference caused by the conflict between non-standard speech and Standard written text, let us list some of the outstanding characteristics of non-standard as they appear in most American Negro ghettos.

Written Expression	Linguistic Feature	Oral Expression
1. John's house	possession	John house
2. John runs	3rd sing. pres.	John run
3. ten cents	plurality	ten cent
4. He jumped	past	He jump
5. She is a cook	copula	She a cook

6.	He doesn't have any toys	negation	He ain't got no toys He don't have no toys He don't got no toys
7.	He asked if I came	past conditional question	He asked did I come
8.	Every day when I come he isn't here	negative + be	Every day when I come he don't be here

In the first five items, sound-symbol relationships and visual discrimination have little if any effect on the non-standard reader's realization of the written Standard text. These realization rules may be stated as follows:

Linguistic Feature	Standard	Non-Standard
1. possession	→ -'s	→ ∅
2. 3rd singular verb	→ -s	→ ∅
3. plurality	→ -s	→ ∅
4. past tense	→ -ed	→ ∅
5. copula	→ is	→ ∅

If the non-standard reader has no reason to supply an oral sound for the Standard written representation of possession, 3rd singular, plurality, past tense and the copula, we can safely say that the sound-symbol relationship plays little or no part in his reading ability in these instances. He is perfectly able to produce non-inflectional word-final sounds which are identical to those above (e.g. miss, his, buzz, bet, etc.), discounting the possibility that he has a speech production problem. As he reads, he must be influenced by his grammatical system, which, as indeed is the case, contains an unmarked possession, 3rd singular verb, plurality, past tense and copula. He must become wary of certain morphemes, just as he must become wary of such graphemes as the l in could and the s in island. Most likely the sound-symbol relationship (B) has been submerged by reading skills provided by his underlying language structure (C) which, in turn, leads him to produce language performance consonant with his dialect even though the visual symbols might argue otherwise.

Sentences 6 through 8 provide somewhat different kinds of problems:

6. Negation

Standard: do + neg + have + any

Non-Standard: $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{have}\\ \text{do}\end{matrix}\right\}$ + neg + $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{have}\\ \text{got}\end{matrix}\right\}$ + no

7. Past conditional question

Standard: if + S + V (past)

Non-Standard: do (past) + S + V

8. Negative + be

Standard: be + neg

Non-Standard: do + neg + be

In each of the above cases there are sufficiently different sound-symbol relationships between the written Standard and the oral non-standard to suggest that this aspect of the reading act is called upon scarcely at all in these instances. Instead, the non-standard speaker who converts the Standard text into non-standard grammatical patterns seems to be more influenced by what seems "natural" to him than by what is found on the printed page.

Research into reading errors produced by speakers of non-standard is still in its infancy but already several things have become clear. Children in the intermediate grades have fewer reading problems of the sort noted in sentences 6 through 8 and produce more "errors" of the sort found in sentences 1 through 5. This seems to indicate that the greater the difference between Standard and non-standard grammatical items, the more likely the intermediate child is to have developed an ability to read it successfully aloud. Conversely, the less basic the difference, the less importance it appears to have for the child. This seems to support the notion that sound-symbol relationships are ultimately less basic than grammatical features, since the readers appear to work harder at grosser differences and ignore smaller ones.

These conclusions, like all conclusions derived from the study of reading errors, are drawn from the oral reading experiences of children who develop sufficient reading skills to read aloud. What is unfortunate about such conclusions, of course, is that children who can't read well enough to risk exposing their ignorance cannot be studied in this way and their performance cannot be measured. It is just possible that one aspect of their reading failure can be attributed to their inability to cope with the grosser differences of the sort noted in sentences 6 through 8, where currently available reading pedagogy, with its emphasis on phonics and word method, only confuses the matter. William A. Stewart has referred to the grammatical plight of the non-standard ghetto resident as that of a quasi-foreign language situation,[8] which, if true, would indicate that we have a far more complicated situation to deal with than normally faces the reading teacher. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the many similarities between the Standard and non-standard grammatical patterns obscure the few but crucial differences.

If the processes of learning to read and learning to speak Standard English are entirely separate entities (as many linguists believe), and if the suggested model of reading acquisition skills noted earlier is accurate, we can reasonably say that the beginning reader, with his heavy leaning on sound-symbol clues to reading, ought to be protected as much as possible from the mismatch between his social dialect and the written text, in the following ways:

1. Include in the beginning reading materials the grammatical forms which occur in non-standard, even though they may be absent in Standard English (cf. sentences 6 through 8).
2. Exclude from the beginning reading materials the grammatical forms which occur in Standard but do not occur in non-standard (cf. sentences 1 through 5).
3. Write beginning reading materials in such a way that the syntactic structures of the written text reflect the syntactic structures of the reader's oral language experience in a way that is consistent with the task at hand -- learning to read (cf. sentences 6 and 7).

It is point number 3 which requires explanation at this time, for we have said very little about syntactic presentation of any magnitude. A major consideration ought to be that sentences in beginning reading materials be so organized as to show the clearest possible relationships between constituent elements. For beginning readers, less concern needs to be shown for problems of monotony than for obscurity or ambiguity. Such obscurity can be seen in the following passage: "Larry went to the movies. 'At the movies, we had fun', said Larry". Beginning readers from all social classes are apt to stumble on the prepositional phrase beginning the second sentence. The experience of our research shows that children tie it to the first sentence, probably because such prepositional phrases seldom are found in sentence initial position in their oral language. Perhaps writers of beginning reading materials should take certain clues from translators of materials for the new literate or for the only slightly educated reader. William Wonderly suggest techniques like the following:[9]

1. Avoid complex or derived constructions and stick to simple or kernel constructions. Use verbal rather than nominal constructions and active rather than passive verbs.

   Although it is important for children to eventually develop an ability to vary sentence structure by using derived constructions (such as nomalizations) and passive voice verbs, there is practically no need for such variation in beginning reading materials. To illustrate his contention that complex derived sentences provide excessive embedding for the beginning reader, Wonderly uses the sentences; John told George to tell Mary to bring her sister, which has at least four base sentences:

   John told George [something]
   George told Mary [something]
   Mary had a sister
   Mary brought the sister[10]

   Several psycholinguists have suggested that such complex sentences tend to be stored in the human memory in the form of their underived, "kernel" constructions (along with their rules for embedding).[11] If this is true, then the reading of embedded sentences might be considered to be a kind of pre-storage disembedding process. It also suggests that beginning readers (of any social class) should be provided materials in kernel or near-kernel form, even at the price of monotony (a less decisive factor for those who have not become over-familiar with the printed page).

2. Avoid structural ambiguity. This is, of course, good advice for beginning reading materials for any class or dialect speaking group. Some of the more humorous sayings of small children stem from unrealized ambiguities such as:

Mother: Sally, go see how old Mrs. Jones is today.

Sally: Mrs. Jones, how old are you today?

Such unintentional ambiguities pose unnecessary additional burdens on the beginning reader. The dangers of potential ambiguities for beginning ghetto children are painfully apparent in the following sentences:

	Standard	Potential "Reading" by Non-Standard Speaker
1.	She arose early today.	She is a rose early today.
2.	We jump into the water.	We jumped into the water.
3.	He sat on the bank. [river]	He sat on the bank. [building]
4.	Flying planes can be dangerous.	The flying planes... or, Flying the planes...
5.	They took the bus to Akron.	They "rode" the bus... or, They "brought" the bus...

Sentences 1 and 2 are ambiguous as a result of the differing grammatical systems between the child's oral language and that of the printed page. Sentence 3 stems from a cultural contrast between reading primer authors and the ghetto child's experience. Sentence 4 is ambiguous because of its underlying (logical) constituent structure and is an example of a type of ambiguity which faces all readers at all levels. Sentence 5 contains an ambiguous lexical form, took, which is equally ambiguous for all classes of readers.

The basic problem for beginning readers is similar for Standard and non-standard speakers, but it is by no means identical. As sentences 1 through 3 illustrate, the culture and language of the ghetto must be considered for potential ambiguity for beginning readers who are there.

3. Use redundancy. The nature of underlying language structure, as we are using the term here, insures a certain

amount of redundance. The sentence, LeRoy eats the carrots contains a number of semi-redundant features. If school makes any sense to him at all, the beginning reader's innate knowledge of English keeps him from reading it LeRoy carrots the eats or LeRoy of house ands.

For beginning readers, this principle means that the writer should be very careful to load the text with predictable materials and to delay metaphor, simile and other non-predictable matters until the reader is far enough along in his learning to be able to tolerate them. If we are serious about using redundancy which parallels the ghetto child's oral language practice, we may decide to include such so-called redundant features as multiple negatives and pronominal apposition in the beginning reading materials, e.g.:

He don't have no baseball bat.
My brother John, he struck out.

If redundancy is reinforcing for the language learner (in this case, the aspiring literate), one must use the inventory of available redundancies.

If beginning reading materials for ghetto children are to relate to the oral language of the learners, these considerations must be reflected in the primers. The matter of the reader's underlying language structure must be given considerable emphasis in these primers, particularly where there is mismatch between standard and non-standard grammatical phenomena. There is considerable room for improvement in the construction of beginning reading material for children of all social classes and races, but there is drastic need for adjustment of such materials for the Negro non-standard speaker, whose grammatical system is sufficiently different from Standard English to hinder his learning to relate his oral language to the grammatical forms of the primer.

The problems of producing overcomplex or derived constructions, ambiguous readings and under-redundant material for Standard English speaking readers has by no means been solved, but it is even multiplied for non-standard speaking children, whose derivations, systematic ambiguities and redundancies have only begun to be observed, much less utilized in reading materials.

NOTES

1. Morton Wiener and Ward Cromer, "Reading and Reading Difficulty: A Conceptual Analysis", Harvard Educational Review, XXXVII (1967), No. 4, pp. 620-643.

2. Occasionally, however, they can cite lexical matters which they think have social consequence.

3. Anne E. Hughes, An Investigation of Certain Sociolinguistic Phenomena in the Vocabulary, Pronunciation and Grammar of Disadvantaged Pre-School Children, Their Parents and Their Teachers in the Detroit Public Schools (unpublished Ph.D. Diss., Michigan State University, 1967). For a summary, see Roger W. Shuy, Walter A. Wolfram and William K. Riley, Linguistic Correlates of Social Stratification in Detroit Speech, Final Report, Cooperative Research Project 6-1347, U.S. Office of Education, Part IV, pp. 1-10.

4. Joan Baratz, "Teaching Reading in an Urban Negro School"; in the present volume, pages 92-116.

5. See Marvin Loflin, On the Structure of the Verb in a Dialect of American Negro English, Office of Naval Research Group Psychology Branch, Technical Report No. 26 (Center for Research in Social Behavior, University of Missouri), and Ralph W. Fasold, "Tense and the Form Be in Black English", in Roger W. Shuy and Ralph W. Fasold (eds.), Current Viewpoints Toward Non-Standard "Be" (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, forthcoming).

6. See, for example, William Labov, The Social Stratification

of English in New York City (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1966), and Shuy, Wolfram and Riley, *op. cit*.

7. The term "rule" is not used here in the current sense in which it is found in theoretical linguistics. That is, we are not referring to derivational history. From the linguist's viewpoint, a more accurate term might be "correspondence".

8. William A. Stewart, "Foreign Language Teaching Methods In Quasi-Foreign Language Situations", in Stewart (ed.), *Non-Standard Speech and the Teaching of English* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1964), pp. 1-15.

9. William Wonderly, *Bible Translations for Popular Use* (New York: American Bible Society, 1968).

10. *Ibid*., pp. 150-151.

11. See, for example, G.A. Miller, "Some Psychological Studies of Grammar", *American Psychologist*, XVII (1962), pp. 748-762; and E.B. Coleman, "Learning of Prose Written in Four Grammatical Transformations", *Journal of Applied Psychology* 49 (1965), pp. 332-341.

TOWARD READING MATERIALS FOR SPEAKERS OF BLACK ENGLISH: THREE LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE PASSAGES

by Walter A. Wolfram and Ralph W. Fasold

Within the last half century the populations of many urban areas in the United States have been drastically restructured. Extensive in-migration by Southern Negroes has resulted in the growth of many large isolated Negro ghettos. The segregated rural populations of the South have thus become the isolated Negro communities of our metropolitan areas. Although sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists have pointed out the cultural gap that exists between the so-called ghetto culture and the culture of mainstream middle-class American society, it has been only recently that the linguistic consequences of this cultural difference have been examined. Previously, the speech behavior of many lower socio-economic class Negroes was simply considered comparable to that of lower socio-economic white citizens who spoke a variety of nonstandard English. Even some dialectologists simply assumed that the speech of the uneducated Negro was no different from that of the uneducated Southern white. Recent descriptive and sociolinguistic studies of the variety of English spoken by urban ghetto dwellers (i.e. Black English[1]), however, have indicated that there are important systematic differences between Black English and Standard English.

At this point, one may ask why the speech behavior found in these isolated Negro communities should differ significantly from the nonstandard variety of English spoken by the lower socio-economic class white. In Northern urban areas, one source of difference can be found in the influence that Southern dialects have on these speech communities. But even in the rural South, Black English is characteristically different from the speech of the lower socio-economic class white, and one must ask why. For an explanation, one need only look at the distinct history of the Negro in American life, both in terms of his original immigration and his subsequent segregation. Recently, creole specialists have been particularly occupied with pointing out the historical derivation of Black English, tracing its origin to a rather widespread creole spoken in the Caribbean area. For example, William A. Stewart notes:

> Of those Africans who fell victim of the Atlantic slave trade and were brought to the New World, many found it necessary to learn some kind of English. With very few exceptions the form of English they acquired was a pidginized one, and this kind of English became so well-established as the principal medium of communication between Negro slaves in the British colonies that it was passed on as a creole language to succeeding generations of the New World Negroes, for whom it was their native tongue.[2]

Present-day Negro dialect, according to Stewart, has resulted from a process which he labels "de-creolization". That is, some of the original features characterizing the creole variety of English spoken by the early Negro slaves were lost through a gradual merging of the creole with the British-derived dialects with which they came in contact. The lexical inventory of this language variety became, for all practical purposes, identical with English (a process called "relexification" by Stewart). Due to the persistance of segregation, however, the process of decreolization was neither instantaneous nor complete. Thus, the nonstandard speech of present day Negroes still exhibits structural traces of a creole predecessor.

Present research by linguists has focused on Black English both as a system in itself and as a variety of English which systematically differs from Standard English. Some of the differences between Standard English and Black English, though seemingly small, have important consequences for the communication of a message. Furthermore, many of the systematic differences between Standard English and Black English have been overlooked by psychologists, sociologists, and educators, who simply dismiss Black English as an inaccurate and unworthy approximation of Standard English. To illustrate, we may briefly cite the Black English use of the form be as a finite verb, in a sentence such as He be at work. This characteristic use of be in Black English has been dismissed as simply an inaccurate attempt by the lower socio-economic class Negro to approximate the Standard English speech norm. But such is clearly not the case. A study of the grammatical and semantic function of this construction employing the descriptive technique of modern linguistic theory reveals that one function of "finite be" has an "habitual" or "iterative" meaning for the Black English speaker. There is no equivalent category in Standard English and such a meaning can only be conveyed by a circumlocution (e.g. He is at work all the time). Thus, we see a clear-cut difference between the two grammatical systems. As will be seen in the annotated passages at the end of this article, there are a number of consequential systematic differences between Black English and Standard English.

Now let us consider the implications of the above on the preparation of reading materials in the school system. We observe clear-cut differences between Black English and Standard English on several different levels (i.e. phonological, grammatical, semantic) of language organization. The normal processes which account for dialect differences have been augmented by a creole substratum. We obviously have a dialect situation which is unique vis-à-vis other dialect varieties of American English. Some educators have assumed that one set of reading materials, perhaps "simplified" (however that may be defined) to avoid structural conflict between Standard English and Black English, is adequate for the general school population. Certainly some lower socio-economic class speakers read extant materials and with some apparent understanding. We would not argue that the Black English speaker is going to understand as little Standard English as a monolingual German speaker reading English, but we do suggest that there will be an inevitable information loss. This leads to the question of what type of reading materials are needed in the inner-city classroom.

Recently, publishers have introduced reading materials that attempt to relate to the culture of the ghetto. They have begun to include stories about Negro families in a ghetto setting, but despite the change in context, the dialogue in these texts is a variety of Standard English which does not very closely approximate the actual language usage of black ghetto youth. Somehow, in the cultural adaptation publishers have largely ignored the linguistic consequences of cultural differences. Educators are thus faced with an anomaly which may be greater than the original mismatch of white middle-class-oriented narratives for black ghetto youth. One can imagine what the response would be if the white suburban youth were characterized by Black English dialogue. Yet, it is precisely this type of anomaly which is perpetuated by reading material which attempts to establish a cultural context indigenous to the ghetto but retains the language of white middle-class suburbia. What appears to be needed, then, is a linguistic adaptation or translation of reading materials to a language system which more closely approximates the child's oral language behavior.

Although adaptation or translation of materials is linguistically justifiable, there remain a number of factors which must be taken into account. One has to do with orthography. We have opted for standard orthography and conventional spelling. Conceivably this could lead to difficulties if Black English pronunciations prove different enough from Standard English, so that there is a serious mismatch between conventional orthography and the phonology of the dialect. However, research on Black English phonology has indicated that conventional orthography is as adequate for Black English as it is for Standard English.[3]

Another factor in the use of the proposed adaptations is that of applicability. There are many black ghetto residents who have learned Standard English. For these people, the Black English materials would scarcely be more applicable than they would be to any other speaker of Standard English. Because of this, the use of the proposed materials cannot be indiscriminate, even within ghetto schools. These materials should be used only with those children who actually use Black English.

A third factor has to do with the acceptability of the materials to black people themselves. The degree to which the adaptations would be acceptable, even to _bona fide_ Black English speakers, is an unanswered question. Sociolinguistic research has shown that speakers who use socially stigmatized speech forms sometimes have the same low opinion of such forms as do speakers who do not use them. As a result, even though the Black English materials might be clearer and more natural to some, they may not be acceptable because of the presence of these stigmatized forms. One consideration which may tend to neutralize rejection, however, is the new feeling of racial pride among black Americans. This pride leads Negroes to seek those parts of their background, both in Africa and America, which are distinctive to them. There is an emphasis on black history, "African bush" hair styles, and neo-African clothing styles. So far this emphasis has not been extended to language. If a realization develops that this dialect, an important part of black culture, is as distinctively Afro-American as anything in the culture, the result may well be a new respect for Black English within the community.

The fourth factor has to do with the acceptability of the materials by educators. One possible objection would be the apparent discrepancy between the use of such materials and widely-advocated plans to teach disadvantaged children spoken Standard English. If a child is given books to read in his socially stigmatized dialect at the same time as he is being taught to replace his Black English with a dialect of Standard English, the two efforts would appear to be at cross-purposes. There are a number of reasons why this difficulty is more apparent than real. First, learning to read another language or dialect and learning to speak it are two different tasks. When the child who speaks Black English is required to learn to read using Standard English materials, he is given two tasks at once: learning to read and learning a new dialect. The Standard English speaking child, by contrast, is only required to learn to read. The success in learning to read is greater when the skill is taught in the mother tongue of the child.[4] In the second place, because of the social dynamics involved, there is some question about the degree to which Standard English can be taught to the ghetto child in the classroom at all. The most successful language learning has, as a component, meaningful interaction between the learner and speakers of the language he is trying to learn. Most Negro children, segregated by race and poverty, will have little opportunity to develop close acquaintanceships with Standard English speakers. There seems to be no reason why we should withhold from inner-city children materials which may help them learn to read simply because the use of these materials might interfere with teaching them spoken Standard English, especially when it may not be possible to teach spoken Standard English in the classroom in the first place. In any event, it seems that some of the usual reasons for teaching spoken Standard English, e.g. to enhance employment opportunities, are not very relevant to elementary school children at the age at which reading is taught. Furthermore, there is some evidence that a young person is well into adolescence before he becomes aware of the social dimensions of language,[5] a fact which would seem to indicate that formal efforts to teach Standard English would be most effective if delayed until junior high school or later--well after reading skills should have been established.

The best proposals for teaching Standard English to speakers of nonstandard dialects have as their goal adding a new dialect to the pupil's linguistic ability, rather than trying to eradicate his "bad" speech. In programs of this type, the students are assured that there is nothing wrong with their speech if it is used in appropriate contexts. If these assurances are sincere, a good way to demonstrate this would be to use the dialect in the educational process, specifically in reading materials.

As an example of how this could be done, we present in what follows three linguistically appropriate passages. First, we have taken an original Black English passage, which is a dramatized enactment of a situation occurring in the ghetto. In this passage we have simply transcribed and edited a section from a phonograph record[6] and arranged it as a quasi-drama. The record contains the reasonably spontaneous speech of six pre-adolescent Harlem boys. We have made no grammatical changes in the text so that at places it may appear that certain forms are importations from Standard English. The second passage is a dialect translation of reading material which was designed for use in inner-city schools.[7] In the third passage we have taken an established piece of literature, the Bible, and translated a passage into idiomatic Black English. In this passage we have not attempted to change the Biblical cultural setting, which is very different from both mainstream middle-class society and the black ghetto. We have approached this translation with the same rigor expected of any serious translation task. That is, we have attempted to be faithful to the form and content of the original manuscript (which, of course, is Greek and not English). Our translation of the Bible passage must therefore be distinguished from attempts to paraphrase the Bible into contemporary cultural parallels of the original message. We have included a Standard English translation of the passage for contrast with the Black English translation. Our annotations indicate those places where there exist clear-cut contrasts between the grammatical systems of Standard English and Black English.[8] Phonological differences are not annotated except where they affect grammatical form. Differences in the semantic content of lexical items have not generally been noted.

DUMB BOY

[Scene I]

Calvin: One day I was walking. Then I met Lennie. Lennie say,[1,2] "Calvin, what happened[3] to your lip?" I said, "Nothing." And then Lenn came over to me and he say,[1,2] "What[4] you mean by nothing?" Like he always say[2] because he's always interested in me and me and him[5] is[6] good friends. So I told him what happened.[3] "This guy named[3] Pierre, he[7] about fifteen..."

Lennie: Yeah?

Calvin: He came over to me...

Lennie: Uh huh.

Calvin: And he hit me in my[8] lip because...

Lennie: Yeah?

Calvin: I...

Lennie: Done[9] what?

Calvin: Had done copied[9] off his paper in school.

[Scene II]

Pierre: Uhh, I told you don't do that no more.[10,11]

Calvin: Come on, please leave me alone, please, please.

Pierre: Next time I catch you copying off somebody in there, you know what I'll do? I'll strangle you to death! Don't do that no more,[10] hear?

Calvin: I'm sorry.

[Scene III]

Lennie: What's that guy[12] name?

Calvin: Pierre.

Lennie: Where[4] he live at?

Calvin: Around our block.

Lennie: How old is he?

Calvin: Fifteen.

Lennie: How big is he?

Calvin: About the size of the other guy named[3] Pierre around our block.

Lennie: Well, tonight it's[13] gonna be a party at 118th Street where I live at. You bring him around there, hear?

Calvin: I surely will.

Lennie: O.K.

[Scene IV]

Calvin: So when I walked in there, everything was silent.

Lennie: Is that the guy over there?

Calvin: Yeah.

Lennie: Hey you, what[4] you hit my little brother for?

Pierre: Did he tell you what happened,[3] man?

Lennie: Yeah, he told me what happened.[3]

Pierre: But you...but you should tell your people to teach him to go to school, man. I know I didn't have a right to hit him. But he was copying off me and the teacher said...I forgot to tell the teacher.

Lennie: What[4] you mean you forgot to tell the teacher? What[4] you mean tell my parents to make him go to school to learn? What[4] you mean by that? What[4] you mean?

Pierre: Just like I said, man, he can't be dumb, man. I don't be[14] with him all his life.

Lennie: You basing or you sounding?[15]

Pierre: I ain't doing neither[10] one.

Lennie: That's more like it. But we[7] gonna deal tonight.

Pierre: If you can't face it, don't waste[16] it. If you can't face it, don't waste[16] it.

SEE A GIRL*
[Standard English Version]

"Look down here," said Suzy.
"I can see a girl in here.
That girl looks like me.
Come here and look, David.
Can you see that girl?"

---

*The setting of this story involves a little girl who looks at her reflection in a puddle. Wiggles is a dog.

"Here I come," said David.
"I want to see the girl."
David said, "I do not see a girl.
A girl is not in here, Suzy.
I see me and my ball."

Suzy said, "Look in here, Mother.
David can not see a girl.
And I can.
Can you see a girl in here?"

"Look down, Suzy," said Mother.
"Look down here, David.
That little girl is my Suzy.
And here is David."

"Mother! Mother!" said Suzy.
"We can see David and me.
We can see Wiggles and a big girl.
That big girl is you."

SEE A GIRL
[Black English Version]

Susan[17] say,[1,2] "Hey you-all,[18] look down here.
I can see a girl in here.
The girl, she[19] look[2] like me.
Come here and look, David.
Could[20] you see the girl?"

David, he[19] say,[1,2] "Here I come.
Let me see the girl."
David say,[1,2] "I don't see no girl.[10]
Ain't no girl[21] in there.
I see me and my ball."

Susan, she[19] say,[1,2] "Momma,[22] look in here.
David don't[1] see no girl,[10] and I do.
You see a girl in there?"

Momma[22] say[1,2] "Look down there, David.
That little girl[7] Susan.
And there go[23] David."

Susan[17] say[1,2] "Momma![22] Momma![22]
We can see David and me.
We can see Wiggles and a big girl.
You[7] that big girl."

JOHN 3:1-17 [Revised Standard Version]

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.' The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can this be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand this? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen; but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

JOHN 3:1-17 [Black English Version]

It[13] was a man named[3] Nicodemus. He was a leader of the Jews. This man, he[19] come[1,2] to Jesus in the night and say,[1,2] "Rabbi, we know you[7] a teacher that come[2] from God, cause can't nobody[24] do the things you be[14] doing 'cept he got God with him."

Jesus, he[19] tell[2] him say,[2,25] "This ain't[10] no jive[26], if a man ain't born over again, ain't no way[21] he[7] gonna get to know God."

Then Nicodemus, he[19] ask him, "How[4,7] a man gonna be born when he[7] already old? Can't nobody[24] go back inside his mother and get[27] born."

So Jesus tell him, say,[2,25] "This ain't[10] no jive[26], this[7] the truth. The onliest way a man[7] gonna get to know God[7], he got to get born regular and he got to get[27] born from the Holy Spirit. The body can only make a body get[27] born, but the Spirit, he[19] make[2] a man so he can know God. Don't be suprised[3] just cause I tell you that you got to get born over again. The wind blow[2] where it want[2] to blow and you can't hardly[10] tell where it's[28] coming from and where it's[28] going to. That's[28] how it go[2] when somebody get[2,27] born over again by the Spirit."

So Nicodemus say,[1,2] "How[4] you know that?"

Jesus say, "You call yourself[29] a teacher that teach Israel and you don't know these kind of things? I'm gonna tell you, we[7] talking about something we know about cause we already seen it. We[7] telling it like it is[30] and you-all[18] think we[7] jiving. If I tell you about things you can see and you-all think we[7] jiving[26] and don't believe me, what's[28] gonna happen when I tell about things you can't see? Ain't nobody[21] gone up to Heaven 'cept Jesus, who come[1,2] down from Heaven. Just like Moses done[9] hung up the snake in the wilderness, Jesus got to be hung up. So that the peoples[31] that believe in him, he can give them[19] real life that ain't never[10] gonna end. God really did love everybody in the world. In fact, he loved[3] the people so much that he done[9] gave up the onliest Son he had. Any man that believe[2] in him, he[7] gonna have a life that ain't never[10] gonna end. He ain't never[10] gonna die. God, he[19] didn't send his Son to the world to act like a judge, but he sent him to rescue the peoples[31] in the world."

NOTES

1. "Black English" is appropriate as a label for the dialect of lower socio-economic class Negroes for at least three reasons. First, there is a precedent for designating dialects with color names (Black Bobo, Red Tai, White Russian). In the second place, the current use of the term "black" in throwing off pejorative stereotypes of Negro life matches our efforts to overcome the stereotype that this dialect is simply bad English. Finally, the name "Black English" avoids the negative connotations of terms which include words like "dialect", "substandard" and even "nonstandard".

2. William A. Stewart, "Sociolinguistic Factors in the History of American Negro Dialects", The Florida FL Reporter, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1967) p. 22.

3. Ralph W. Fasold, "Orthography in Reading Materials for Black English Speaking Children" [in the present volume, pp. 68-91].

4. Evelyn Bauer mentions several experiments involving North American Indians in which superior results were obtained when Indian children were taught to read in their own language before attempting to read the national language. (Evelyn Bauer, "Teaching English to North American Indians in BIA Schools", The Linguistic Reporter, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1968) p. 2.)

5. William Labov, The Social Stratification of English in New York City (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1966), p. 421.

6. Street and Gangland Rhythms (Folkways 5589 [1959]).

7. Writers' Committee of the Great Cities School Improvement Program of the Detroit Public Schools, Gertrude Whipple, Chairman, Four Seasons with Suzy (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 48-50. Used by permission. [In preparing reading materials for the ghetto we certainly do not recommend working from a Standard English text to a Black English version, but in this case we have done so in order to point out some contrasts between the two versions of the story.]

8. It will be apparent that some of the features discussed here are shared both by Black English and other nonstandard dialects of English.

ANNOTATIONS

[1] Some verbs, like "come" and "say", are not marked for past tense in Black English narratives, even when the context is past time.

[2] Black English lacks the -s suffix which marks the present tense with third person singular subjects in Standard English.

[3] When the suffix -ed is realized by a stop following a base form which ends in a consonant, the stop is not pronounced (thus, the pronunciation /neym/, for Standard English /neymd/). This reflects a Black English phonological pattern in which syllable final consonant clusters in Standard English correspond to simple consonants in Black English (see note 16). The pattern illustrates how phonological constraints in Black English affect the presence of certain grammatical categories.

[4] Sentences which would have a pre-posed verbal auxiliary in Standard English due to the formation of a content question generally have no auxiliary at all in the corresponding Black English sentence. For example, the "do" which would appear in the Standard English equivalent of questions like "what you mean by nothing?" is absent for this reason.

[5] In coordinate noun phrases, the distinction between objective and subjective forms of the pronoun is often neutralized, so that the "objective" form may function as a grammatical subject.

[6] Occasionally (and particularly with coordinate constructions), the singular conjugated forms of "be" ("is", "was") occur with the plural subject in Black English.

[7] The present tense form of the copula frequently is not realized in a number of different syntactic environments in Black English. Generally, where the contracted form of the copula may occur in Standard English the stative condition is indicated simply by word order in Black English.

[8] In Standard English, sentences like "kiss her on the cheek" and "punch Jack in the stomach" involving a verb of physical contact, a personal nominal reference and a body part, the definite article "the" is used with the body part although it belongs to the same person referred to by the personal noun or pronoun. In Black English, the possessive pronoun is used in these constructions instead of the article.

[9] The use of "done" plus the past tense of a verb is a construction indicating completed action. Some speakers occasionally include a form of "have" as in "had done copied..."

[10] In Black English, negation is typically marked not only in the main verb phrase, but also in each indefinite determiner or indefinite pronoun in the sentence, as well as in certain adverbs like "hardly" and "never".

[11] An embedded imperative may be retained in its original quoted form instead of being realized in an infinitive construction (e.g. "I told you don't do that no more" instead of "I told you not to do that no more").

[12] Black English lacks possessive -s so that possession is indicated only by the order of items.

[13] "It", in Black English, can be used as an "expletive" or "presentative" in addition to its function as a pronoun referring to a specific object or participant. In this usage it is equivalent to Standard English "there".

[14] The form "be" can be used in Black English as a verb in the same constructions in which "is, am, are, was, were" are used in Standard English, but with a different meaning. The use of "be" as a main verb denotes iteration or habituation.

[15] The expressions "basing" and "sounding" refer to types of aggressive verbal behavior. "Basing" is a kind of back-talk and "sounding" refers to a special type of ritual insult.

[16] The items "face" and "waste" have rhyming endings in Black English because the final stop member of a syllable final consonant cluster is frequently absent.

[17] The use of nicknames like "Jim" for "James" or "Dick" for "Richard" is rare in ghetto communities. Therefore, "Susan" is more natural in Black English reading materials than "Suzy".

[18] Unlike most Standard English dialects, Black English distinguishes the singular and plural of the second person pronoun ("you" versus "you-all", pronounced /yɔl/).

[19] A pronoun is often used following the noun subject of a sentence in Black English. "Pronominal apposition" functions to focus on the "topic" of the sentence and to indicate the re-entry of a participant in a discourse.

[20] In a number of contexts, Black English speakers use "could" where Standard English has "can".

[21] This construction is a very common stylistic variation of "it ain't no girl in here" or "it ain't nobody who has gone up to Heaven" (cf. note 13).

[22] Black children generally call their mothers "Momma". "Mother" is likely to be taken as an abbreviation for a taboo term.

[23] The idomatic expression "there go" is equivalent to the Standard English construction "there is" when it refers to the existential location of something. Generally, this construction is limited to the speech of adolescents and pre-adolescents.

[24] There are two types of emphatic negative sentences in Black English involving the pre-position of a negativized auxiliary. Black English, unlike most white nonstandard dialects, permits both an indefinite subject and the main verb to carry negative markers. Thus, "...nobody can't do the things you be doing..." is a grammatical sentence in the dialect, meaning that nobody can do these things. To emphasize such a negative statement Black English speakers may prepose the negativized verbal auxiliary to

the front of the sentence, much as the ordinary English yes-no question formation. Two kinds of stress pattern are associated with this structure. If the stress pattern is "càn't nóbody (do something)", it expresses general emphasis. If the stress pattern is "cán't nobòdy (do something)", it carries the overtone of disbelief.

[25] Quotations can be introduced by the form "say" in addition to any other quotative words such as "tell" and "ask".

[26] The concept "jive" in the Negro ghetto refers to a particular form of language behavior in which the speaker assumes a guise in order to persuade someone of a particular fact. It is often used to refer to the deception of someone with flattery or false promises.

[27] "Get" (or "got") often functions as a passive marker in Black English.

[28] When a pronoun ending in /t/ like "it" or "that" precedes the contracted form of "is", the contraction /s/ is pronounced and the /t/ is not (cf. note 7).

[29] The expression "you call yourself X" or "you call yourself doing X" implies mild doubt that the hearer really is X or is doing X.

[30] The expression "telling it like it is" refers to making an accurate and trustworthy assessment of a situation, without any attempt to exaggerate.

[31] -s plural can be suffixed to forms which in Standard English form their plural in some irregular way (suppletive forms, internal change, etc.).

ON THE USE OF NEGRO DIALECT IN THE TEACHING OF READING

by William A. Stewart

By the time he reaches the age of five or six, (i.e. school age, in many societies), every normally developed human being has already mastered the fundamentals of at least one language, and has done so quite accurately without any need for formal instruction from others.[1] Indeed, so intrinsic is the normal child's interest in the language used around him and so apparently spontaneous his acquisition of it, that it is reasonable to suppose a propensity for language to be part of the genetic endowment of the human species -- with only the structural details of each language left to invention, cultural transmission, and historical change.[2] But if it is in man's nature to acquire a language through mere exposure to it at the right time in life, that nature also seems to require (whether for neurological, psychological, or other reasons) that the language behavior encountered be presented in certain ways and take certain overt forms before it can be "picked up" and internalized by the child. For one thing, in the early stages of language acquisition, at least, the language behavior encountered by the child must be socially relevant (by emanating directly from other human beings) and in context (so that the meaning of it can be established). For another (and this may or may not be a further ramification of the social-relevance requirement), the language behavior encountered must be encoded into systematic and perceivable manifestations of human behavior -- usually vocal noises.[3]

Unfortunately, written language does not fulfill any of these requirements. When encountered by a language-acquiring child, written text is not likely to be in the process of emanating from another individual, nor is its meaning likely to be apparent from the immediate situation at the time of encounter. In addition, human beings simply do not seem to be "programmed" to acquire writing systems automatically -- even if these are based on a known or frequently heard spoken language. Consequently, reading and writing skills have to be taught formally in most cases, and subsequent to first-language acquisition. This explains why there are so many people in the world who do not know how to read or write a language, while there is hardly anyone who does not know how to speak a language. In addition, there is the fact that writing is a quite recent phenomenon in contrast to speaking, and therefore still a functionally marginal one in many societies.

This problem exists even when the written language is little more than a graphic rendition of the spoken language of the population, as is more-or-less true for some segments of modern European and American societies. In many parts of the world, however, learning to read (even with substantial amounts of formal instruction) may be rendered infinitely more difficult by a tradition of writing primarily or exclusively in some language other than the one (or ones) which the population normally learns to speak. In the West African countries, for example, practically all writing (and certainly all important writing) is done in English or French, in spite of the fact that scarcely any West African learns English or French as his first language. In those countries, the teaching of reading is nothing less than the teaching of reading of English or French, so that the reading process itself must either follow or run concurrently with the teaching of English or French as a foreign language.[4] Even in countries in which the national language is indeed that of the majority of the population, a situation similar to the West African one may hold for members of foreign-language-speaking minority groups, since many of these are expected to function as literates in the larger society.

For multilingual situations of the West African type, one of the most promising innovations in the direction of a viable literacy program is the pedagogical separation of beginning reading from the encumberment of concurrent foreign language teaching. This separation is accomplished by the simple strategy of teaching individuals to read first in their own native language, and then transferring the reading skills thus acquired to the task of reading in whatever foreign language is the ultimate goal of the literacy program. In some cases, it may be necessary for the literacy specialist to devise an orthography for the native language of the learners, if this is an unwritten one, while in other cases an existing orthography may or may not need modification to facilitate transfer to the ultimate target language. Traditionally-oriented educators and administrators who do not understand the rationale for the separation of learning tasks involved in this approach, and who accordingly see the teaching of initial reading in some normally unwritten or nationally unimportant language as an utter waste of time, may be surprised to find groups which have been taught literacy by the native-to-foreign language technique catching up with and even surpassing groups which have begun reading in conjunction with the learning of the national (though, for them, foreign) language.[5] But whether innovative or traditional methods are employed, the general multilingualism of areas like Africa, Asia, and parts of Europe and Latin America makes those involved acutely aware that pedagogical problems related to literacy can be, and often are, predicated on language-learning problems.

In the United States, that portion of the national population for which reading in English constitutes reading in a completely foreign language is relatively small when compared with the truly multilingual nations just discussed. At present, Spanish-speaking Americans and speakers of American Indian languages seem to constitute the most well-defined cases of this. For these groups, such specialized literacy materials as there are do tend to take the matter of language differences into account; and even relatively unsophisticated reading teachers can be expected to realize that retardation in the reading of English texts by Mexican-American or Navajo children probably has something to do with the fact that many of these children do not speak English natively -- even if the teacher doesn't know exactly what to do about the situation.

Even though aware of a possible relationship between language differences and serious reading problems in American school children from foreign-language backgrounds, most reading specialists would not be inclined to consider a similar cause for reading retardation in children from an English-speaking background. To be sure, it is recognized that even these children may experience initial difficulties in relating writing to speech, but this is understood to be little more than the effect of minimal differences between written and spoken varieties of the same language -- in this case, English.[6] At the same time, the apparent overall similarity between the spoken language which English-speaking children bring to school and the written language which they encounter in books is seen to preclude language differences as a primary cause of any failure on the part of such children to attain normal reading proficiency. When such failure occurs, there is accordingly a strong tendency to attribute it to extra-linguistic factors, such as abnormalities or malfunctions either in the child or in his surroundings. These real or imagined causes of reading retardation include organic (i.e. neurological or physiological) disorders, and such functional disorders as emotional disturbance in the child, or his lack of exposure to written language, education, a stimulating environment, etc. And -- with tragic consequences, as will be seen -- extra-linguistic causes have been appealed to almost exclusively in recent attempts to explain why it is that reading retardation is more pronounced among Negro English-speaking children than among white English-speaking children in many American schools.

One theory which has been advanced to explain this does involve an organic principle, though not actually an organic disorder. It is that racially correlated differences in reading achievement (as well as achievement in other school subjects) are simply a manifestation of racial differences in mean intellectual capacity. This theory is based in large part on apparent evidence that Negroes tend to score significantly lower than whites on standardized intelligence tests. The evidence is striking enough to indicate some variable at work, even though it turns out that few of the relevant experiments have been well enough designed or controlled to be entirely reliable, or to show what the different scores indicate. Furthermore, it has been possible to arrange experiments which offer some counter-evidence to the theory.[7] Debate on the issue has been strongly polarized, and often more socio-political than scientific. On the one hand are the hereditarians, who maintain that race-related differences in performance on intelligence tests have a genetic basis. Aligned against them are the environmentalists, who insist that these differences, even if real, are but the product of ecological and experiential factors. Of the two, the hereditarians' argumentation seems especially weak. They claim that there is a lower intelligence mean for Negroes than for whites, and either state or imply that this relates directly to biological differences between the two races. Yet, they base these claims on studies in which distinctions between "Negro" and "white" have had more of a social than a biological basis (the real meaning of "Negro" in the United States). Furthermore, the hereditarians simply have not given due consideration to nonhereditary variables. As the environmentalists are quick to point out, the relatively poorer performance by lower-class Negroes than by middle-class Negroes shows quite clearly that, whatever the causes of performance differences may be, they are not racially distributed to any degree which would indicate a genetic basis.

From the environmentalist side, a number of reasons have been suggested why Negroes may seem to do relatively more poorly than whites on intelligence tests, and in such school subjects as reading. One possibility sometimes suggested is that there may be a higher incidence of intellectually debilitating organic disorders among Negroes than among whites. But the origin of these disorders would not be genetic; rather, they would be induced in individuals by such features of lower-class living as poor pre- and postnatal care, substandard nutrition, physical abuse, etc. Their apparent racial correlation would only be a function of the disproportionately high percentage of Negroes in the American lower-class population. In a similar vein, a higher rate of debilitating functional disorders (such as emotional disturbance) is sometimes claimed for Negroes, and this is also attributed to the rigors of lower-class life.

Although it is perfectly true that both organic and functional disorders can affect intelligence scores and reading ability (sometimes drastically), the real question is whether such pathologies are induced regularly enough by the lower-class condition to account for the regularity with which the supposed intellectual deficit occurs in the Negro population. Considering the performance differences between Negroes and whites, the incidence of pathology in the lower-class Negro environment would have to be considerable. And this leads to another pertinent question concerning the validity of such explanations: Is there any evidence that the lower-class Negro environment is sufficiently worse than the lower-class white environment to account satisfactorily for the intellectual performance differences between lower-class Negroes and even lower-class whites? In at least some areas in which lower-class Negroes and lower-class whites score differently (in Appalachia, for example), their material condition is remarkably similar. A different explanation -- one which would at least account for a higher incidence of emotional disturbance among Negroes (if this should prove to be the case) -- is race prejudice, pure and simple. But then why do middle-class Negroes score better than lower-class Negroes, when the former are apparently in more of a position to feel the brunt of prejudice directly?

Of the many theories which have been advanced by environmentalists to explain differences in intellectual performance between Negroes and whites, certainly the most popular have been those positing as a basic cause some sort of cognitive or communicative deficit. According to such theories, there is something about the lower-class (usually Negro) environment, both social and physical, which inhibits the normal development of abstract thought and well-formed, expressive language in the growing child. The factors which are believed to inhibit cognitive and linguistic development in the lower-class

Negro child are all environmental: excessive noise and disorder, depressing surroundings, the absence of a father, insufficient verbal interaction with the mother, no contact with books, limited experiences, etc. That an individual thus burdened with a "cognitive deficit" and "verbal destitution" would do poorly on any kind of intellectual task seems almost beyond question, and the impression that this is so has undoubtedly contributed to the widespread acceptance of environmentalist deficit theories.

Yet, the questions which should really be asked about these theories are: Do they describe the lower-class Negro environment accurately? and, Do they demonstrate a causal relationship between any of the characteristics of such environments on the one hand and basic cognitive and linguistic development on the other? When furnished, the answers to these questions may be quite disconcerting to the deficit theories. For example, there is no real evidence that lower-class environments are significantly more noisy or less structured than middle-class ones, nor is it clear just how noise levels, say, of an inner-city magnitude would stultify cognitive or linguistic development. And, in view of the importance of the peer-group as a source of language models for the growing child, it seems quite risky to assume that parental involvement is an absolute necessity in even first-language acquisition. This would especially be true in lower-class Negro families, where there are usually several siblings and many, many playmates.

At present, theories that the special educational problems of lower-class Negro children stem from cognitive, cultural, and/or linguistic deficiencies in these children or their environments seem to be subscribed to whole-heartedly by most educational psychologists. And, given the prestige which psychological formulations of learning problems currently enjoy in educational circles, it is not surprising that deficit theories have been widely accepted by teachers, curriculum designers, and school administrators as the "scientific" reason why lower-class Negro children do so poorly in the classroom. Of course, the acceptance by educators of deficit theories is facilitated by the fact that, just like their psychological gurus, few educators are familiar enough with lower-class Negro life to know how badly such theories represent it, and by the fact that any conceptual inadequacies in psychological research designs for measuring lower-class Negro performance on standardized tests are likely to be effectively obscured by impressive test specifications (masking the inappropriateness of the tests), by elaborate statistical analyses (masking the irrelevance of the variables), and by complicated charts and graphs of the misleading or prevaricating results.[8]

As one would expect, hereditarian explanations of Negro and white differences in intellectual achievement and school performance have appealed most strongly to racists, while environmentalist explanations have found eager acceptance among egalitarians. Of course, there are many social scientists, social activists, and educators who make it a point never to discuss such differences, or even acknowledge their existence. This conspiracy of silence seems to be a manifestation either (depending upon one's point of view) of the assumption that such differences, while probably debilitating, are nevertheless innate and unchangeable, and therefore that nothing would be gained by talking about them, or that the measurements which show them represent deliberate misrepresentation or some minor procedural mistake in the testing methodology, so that if one only ignores them they will eventually waft away by themselves. For those who do believe in facing up to the data, however, some sort of explanation of these differences must be sought, if for no reason other than that American education might come to understand why what is happening to it is happening. I suspect that the popularity among egalitarians of the environmentalist deficit theories as explanations of ethnically-correlated performance differences derives not only from ethnocentrism, but also from the conviction that they represent the only honest alternative to hereditarianism short of an egalitarian act of faith which, far from bringing about an understanding of the problem, would only serve to obscure its causes all the more.[9]

The fact that debate on the issue of Negro intelligence has been carried on largely in terms of genetics and ecology might well come as a surprise to social scientists or educators who are not familiar with American social rhetoric. For, were a difference in intellectual performance to be found between two populations in almost any other part of the world, it would be considered a matter of course to explore first the possibility that the apparent intellectual disparity might merely reflect cultural differences between the two groups through a bias in the measurement techniques toward one or the other culture.[10] In the United States, on the other hand, only the scantiest consideration has been given to the same possibility -- that being "white" and "Negro" might involve correlations with more-or-less different American subcultures, and that cultural differences might therefore be responsible for the intellectual performance disparity between the two ethnic groups. Rather, American social scientists have generally assumed that, once such variables as social class and regional provenience (particularly rural vs. urban) are accounted for, Negroes and whites would turn out to be culturally identical.[11] That this assumption should remain unchallenged (and, indeed, that it should have been made in the first place) in the face of such obvious and omnipresent indications of cultural differences between whites and Negroes as are evident in musical styles, patterns of worship, dress, expressive behavior (such as the forms and uses of laughter), and a host of other cultural domains in which intra-ethnic variation according to social class and region never quite obscures the inter-ethnic differences, is probably due to its compatibility with the American "melting pot" myth. For it is a basic tenet of that myth that all foreign immigrant groups are automatically and completely assimilated to the Anglo-Saxon national culture within one or two generations, so that cultural differences between groups of different ethnic or national origin are not to be expected to last for long. In fact, the Negro is often singled out by propagators of the myth as a prime example of just how thorough the assimilation process can be in America -- the implication being that, since American Negroes no longer exhibit identifiably African behaviors, they must have assimilated completely to the cultural patterns of American whites.

Although this impression of the cultural relationship of American Negroes to American whites is inaccurate in many important ways, it is not difficult to see how it evolved. For, when Africans and Europeans came together in North America, people tended (as they still do) to regard behavioral differences as legitimate cultural differences only when they could be associated with some national or tribal source. Consequently, observable deviations in the behavior of Negroes from the norms of whites were considered to be culturally conditioned only so long as the Negroes retained enough identifiably African behaviors to insure their being considered Africans. However, once the visible trappings of African tribal cultures were given up by American Negroes (or at least became subtle enough to escape identification), continued deviations from white behavioral norms were considered gaffes and gaucheries at best, and more often as evidence of intellectual immaturity in the Negro and therefore justification for his enslavement. Unfortunately, and in spite of Emancipation, this blindness to the cultural nature of Negro and white behavioral differences has persisted down to the present day, with the white liberal and black revolutionary alike the simultaneous perpetrators and victims of it that Massa and Cudjo were on the Old Plantation.[12]

In at least one area -- that of language -- there has been a growing awareness of the historical and functional legitimacy of Negro deviations from white behavioral norms. Long regarded by the public in general and educators in particular as the result of carelessness, laziness, ignorance, or stupidity, the nonstandard speech patterns of American Negroes are now coming to be recognized as perfectly normal dialect forms which are just as much the product of systematic (though formally unspecified) linguistic rules as are the speech patterns of whites. That the Negro speech of a given region and social class may differ from the white speech of even the same region and a comparable social class is now understood to be the result, not of physiological or mental differences between Negroes and whites, but rather of the interrelationship between language history and American social structure.[13] For, if early written samples of North American slave speech are at all reliable, it would seem that the unique characteristics of present-day Negro dialects derive, at least in part, from former pidgin and creole stages. And this would also explain why the most nonstandard varieties of Negro dialect are structurally much more deviant from standard English than are the most nonstandard dialects of native American whites.[14]

Once this is understood, it should become apparent that language differences, as opposed to language deficits, may well account for most of the chronic difficulty which so many lower-class Negro children have with standard English in the classroom and, later, on the job. For, wherever the structure of standard English differs from that of their own nonstandard dialect, the "interference" of the familiar pattern in the production of the unfamiliar pattern may occur. This is, in fact, exactly what happens when a Spanish-speaking child produces a Spanish-like English utterance. Thus, the language-learning problems of a Negro-dialect speaker who is trying to acquire standard English are, in many ways, more like those of, say, a Spanish speaker who is trying to acquire English than they are like those of a middle-class, English-speaking child. For the first two, the task is one of learning structurally different functional equivalents of patterns which they already know; for the third, the task is merely one of learning additional and compatible patterns to the ones already known. In other words, the learning of standard English by speakers of Negro dialect is more like foreign-language learning than it is like first-language learning. For this reason, techniques which have been developed in foreign-language teaching to deal with structural conflicts between different language systems are being found to be much more appropriate for teaching standard English patterns to Negro-dialect speakers than are the pathology-oriented methods of traditional speech therapy and remedial English.[15] And even though the overall structural difference between Negro dialect of the most nonstandard kind and standard English of the most formal kind is obviously not as great as between any kind of English and a foreign language like Spanish, this does not necessarily make it easier for the Negro-dialect speaker to acquire an acceptably standard variety of English than for the speaker of Spanish to do so. On the contrary, the subtlety of the structural differences between the two forms of English, masked as they are by the many similarities, may make it almost impossible for the speaker of Negro dialect to tell which patterns are characteristic of nonstandard dialect, and which ones are not. Indeed, this may explain why it is that many immigrant populations have been able to make a more rapid and successful transition from their original foreign language to standard English than migrant Negroes have from their own nonstandard dialect to standard English.[16]

Toward the beginning of this paper, it was indicated that the attainment of such a seemingly rudimentary skill as literacy in the national language could actually turn out to be an inordinately difficult task for persons who might not happen to speak that language -- success in learning to read being, for them, largely dependent upon success in learning a new language. Mention was made of the recent development of special literacy programs for such persons, involving the teaching of beginning reading in the learner's native language and the subsequent transfer of the basic skills thus acquired to the reading (and even to the learning) of the national language. That early in the paper, the possible implications which the native-to-foreign approach to literacy might have for teaching reading to "disadvantaged" Negroes could not be explored directly, since, without the intervening discussion, few reading specialists would have been prepared to see any similarity at all between the reading problems of linguistic minorities in foreign lands and those of Negro children in American schools. But once it has become clear that low intellectual performance of whatever kind on the part of Negro school children could be due, not to neurological or experiential deficits, but rather to unformalized yet real differences between their own cultural orientation and school expectations, and, more specifically, once it becomes clear that the chronic difficulties which such children often have with oral standard English can be traced to structural differences between nonstandard Negro dialect (the linguistic aspect of their own culture) and standard English (the linguistic aspect of the school culture), then the applicability of native-to-foreign literacy techniques becomes a distinct possibility. After all, might not learning to read in an unfamiliar dialect have associated with it some of the problems which have been found to characterize learning to read in an unfamiliar language?

Although no adequate study of the role of dialect differences in the reading proficiency of American Negro children has yet been undertaken, a suggestion of what is likely to be the case is available from a somewhat comparable European situation. In a Swedish-dialect context, Tore Österberg found that the teaching of basic reading skills in the nonstandard dialect of the school children in a particular district (Piteå) increased proficiency, not only in beginning reading in the nonstandard dialect, but also in later reading of the standard language.[17] In fact, one of Österberg's most dramatic findings was that the experimental group (which began with nonstandard dialect materials and then changed to standard Swedish materials) overtook the control group (which used standard Swedish materials from the very beginning) in reading proficiency in standard Swedish -- I repeat, standard Swedish -- even though the additional steps of the bidialectal approach meant that the students in the experimental group spent less total time with the standard language.

But even before I became aware of the Österberg study, with its obvious implications for American education, the suitability of the bidialectal approach to the reading problems of inner-city Negro children was suggested to me by a fortuitous experience. In the latter part of 1965, I had decided to do a Negro-dialect translation of Clement Clarke Moore's famous Christmas poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" (more widely known as "The Night Before Christmas") for Christmas greetings from the Urban Language Study of the Center for Applied Linguistics.[18] In order to highlight the grammatical differences between nonstandard Negro dialect and standard English, I decided to retain standard-English word spellings in the nonstandard version wherever possible. Thus, I wrote *it's*, *the*, *night*, *before*, and *Christmas*, even though a child might be apt to pronounce /is/, /də/, /nay/, /bifów/, and /kɨ́smɨs/. One modification I made in this rule was that, when the nonstandard pronunciation of a particular Negro-dialect word was better represented by the spelling of some standard-English word other than its direct functional equivalent, that spelling was used. Thus the Negro-dialect verb /fuw/, though equivalent to *fill* in standard English, was spelled *full* in the poem. In addition, the form and sequencing of the events in Moore's original version were recast to make the nonstandard version more in keeping with Negro discourse style and inner-city cultural reality. Some idea of what the result of this translation process looked like can be gotten from the first few lines, which went:

> It's the night before Christmas, and here in our house,
> It ain't nothing moving, not even no mouse.
> There go we-all stockings, hanging high up off the floor,
> So Santa Claus can full them up, if he walk in
> through our door.

For those who are not entirely familiar with this kind of dialect, I should probably point out that the Negro-dialect phrase *There go we-all stockings* does not mean "There go our stockings" in standard English. As often used by Negro children, the idioms *here go* and *there go* serve to point out something (not necessarily in motion) to the listener, and are thus equivalent to standard English *here is/are* and *there is/are*, or to French *voici* and *voilà*.

One evening, while I was working at home on the translation of the poem (a draft of which was in my typewriter, with the original version at the side), two inner-city children dropped by for a visit. While I was busy getting some refreshments for them from the refrigerator, Lenora (then about 12 years old) went over to play with the typewriter and found the draft of the nonstandard version of the poem in it. Lenora was one of the "problem readers" of the public schools; she read school texts haltingly, with many mistakes, and with little ability to grasp the meaning of what she read. Yet, when she began to read the nonstandard version of the poem, her voice was steady, her word reading accurate, and her sentence intonation was natural (for her dialect, of course). This unexpected success in reading so surprised Lenora that she began to discuss the experience with her little brother. They decided that there was something different about the text, but were unable to tell exactly what it was. To compare, I then had Lenora read the standard English version of the poem, which was sitting beside the typewriter. When she did, all the "problem reader" behaviors returned.

Now, it must be remembered that both the nonstandard and standard versions of the poem were written with the same spellings for similar words, e.g., Christmas in both. Therefore, it was clear that Lenora was reacting primarily to the difference between a familiar and an unfamiliar type of grammar. For, if she could read standard-English words without difficulty when they were presented in a nonstandard grammatical framework, then this meant that word-reading or sound-spelling-meaning correspondences were not the problem that they seemed to be when she attempted to read standard English. It struck me that this unplanned "experiment" (later duplicated with other inner-city children) suggested an entirely different dimension of possible reading problems for inner-city Negro children than those focused on by such methods as i.t.a. and phonics. This other dimension is that of structural interference between the grammatical patterns of the nonstandard dialect which many Negro children speak and the grammatical patterns of the standard English in which reading materials are invariably written. And, if it has been considered pedagogically useful to adapt beginning reading materials to the word pronunciations of middle-class white children (as has been done in i.t.a. and phonics), then might it not also be useful to adapt beginning reading materials to the sentence patterns of lower-class Negro children?

From my own point of view, which is that of a linguist who has spent most of his life in multilingual, diglossic, and multidialectal situations, who considers them normal, and who feels that educational techniques ought to take them into account, the answer is that beginning reading materials should indeed be adapted to the patterns of nonstandard Negro dialect -- and to those of any other nonstandard dialect which school children in a particular area may speak, for that matter. Yet, I think I can anticipate at least four reasons which might be given why the "correctness" of reading materials should not be tampered with and, in particular, why Negro-dialect patterns should not be allowed to appear in school readers.

One argument which might be advanced against the incorporation of nonstandard-dialect patterns into beginning reading materials is that the process ought to be unnecessary; children from whatever language or dialect background ought to be instructed in oral standard English as part of their pre-reading training, and reading materials ought to be written in standard English from the very start. Neat though this approach may seem, it is simply impossible to carry out in most rural and inner-city schools. For the fact is that these schools are full of functionally illiterate, nonstandard-dialect-speaking children of all grades and ages -- many of whom are simply too far along in the curriculum to be told to stop trying to read, go back, and take remedial oral English with the kindergarten children and first-graders. Even if most predominantly Negro schools were to have effective programs for teaching oral standard English to pre-readers (and most still do not), the migratory and working patterns of rural children and the high geographic mobility of inner-city children would make it difficult for such schools to insure that the children going into beginning reading would all have already had instruction in oral standard English. Consequently, the recognition of nonstandard dialect in reading instruction will probably be necessary for at least some pupils at all grade levels in such schools. And this is as it should be. Special oral-language programs for Negro-dialect speakers and special reading instruction for Negro-dialect speakers ought, after all, to be complementary activities, not rival ones.

Another argument which is very likely to be advanced against the idea of incorporating Negro-dialect grammatical patterns into beginning reading materials is that the features of Negro dialect which seem to interfere the most with the effective oral reading of standard English do not seem to be grammatical ones; rather, they seem to be phonological ones (i.e. differences in pronunciation). This is certainly the impression of many reading specialists, and it agrees substantially with the view which most speech therapists and many English teachers have of Negro dialect as more a matter of deviant "speech" (i.e. pronunciation) than of different "language" (i.e. grammar). What is more, those who argue thus can point to a great deal of support for this assumption from dialectology and linguistics. For it has long been the view of most dialectologists that American dialects of English differ from each other primarily in details of pronunciation and, to a lesser extent, of vocabulary. In fact, so fully was this concept of American dialect differences borrowed from European dialect geography that, when the field questionnaires for work on an atlas of American dialects were drawn up, they were designed to elicit phonological and lexical information almost exclusively. (Of course, the results of the American Dialect Atlas fieldwork reinforced the original view of dialect differences, since the questionnaires revealed virtually no grammatical differences!) And, more recently, some linguists who have studied Negro dialect from a transformational viewpoint have maintained that a few phonological processes and minor transformations account for most of the observable structural differences between nonstandard Negro dialect and standard English. In other words, even apparent word-form and grammatical differences may, in this view, represent little more than different phonological and transformational treatments of otherwise similar "underlying" structures.[19]

It is perhaps inevitable that those who take this view will see the special reading problems of lower-class Negro school children primarily as a difficulty in word or sentence recognition caused by the frequent lack of correspondence between Negro-dialect pronunciations and standard-English spellings (which, of course, represent standard-English pronunciations much more closely). That is, the Negro child is seen as having to cope primarily with such problems as learning that there is a correspondence between the spelling and meaning of pen and pin in written standard English, even though the word for the thing one writes with and the word for the thing one sticks with are both pronounced [pɪn] (or, alternatively, [pɛn]) in Negro dialect. And the reading teacher is seen as having to cope primarily with such problems as deciding, when a Negro child reads aloud /ges/ for *guest*, whether he has understood the meaning of the written word and merely given it its Negro-dialect pronunciation, or whether he has misread the word as *guess*.[20]

Now, it is undoubtedly true that sound-spelling-meaning correspondences between spoken Negro dialect and written standard English are less regular (or, at least, less obviously regular) than between spoken standard English and written standard English. Still, they are by no means neat in even the latter case. For example, speakers of standard English must learn to deal with the correlation to different meanings of the written distinction between homophonic *son* and *sun*, just as speakers of Negro dialect (or, indeed, of southern varieties of standard English) must learn to deal with what for them are homophonic *pen* and *pin*. And, of course, spellings like *of* and *island* are not representative of the pronunciation either of Negro dialect or standard English. Yet, most speakers of standard English do not seem to be hindered very much by such sound-spelling-meaning irregularities when they are learning to read -- a fact which would suggest that absolute parallelism between phonology and orthography is not really a prerequisite to literacy in English. Indeed, even relatively inexperienced readers seem to be able to cope with a fair amount of sound-spelling irregularity, provided that they are familiar with the spoken forms of the words and are able to get sufficient cues for associating the written and spoken forms from the lexical and syntactic context.

Probably more serious in its consequences for reading instruction is the way in which differences between Negro dialect pronunciations and standard English spellings can be misinterpreted by reading teachers when they attempt to evaluate reading success through viva-voce performance. Unfortunately, there seems to be no simple way of deciding whether, in a particular instance, /ges/ represents a Negro dialect pronunciation of guest, or a misreading of it as guess. It would be more likely to be the former, but the background and training of many reading teachers would incline them to see it as the latter. And, although linguists know that a verb need not be accompanied by an explicit marker of the past tense to have past-tense meaning in Negro dialect (or, sometimes, even in standard English -- cf. hit, which never takes a past-tense marker), most reading teachers would probably assume that, when a Negro child reads a sentence like They guessed who he was to sound more like They guess who he was, this is evidence that he has missed the past-tense meaning of the verb guess. In fact, the Negro child may merely pronounce written guessed as /ges/ for the same reason that he pronounces guest as /ges/ -- because final /st/ clusters turn into /s/ in his dialect. The failure to articulate a final written -ed when reading aloud no more indicates that a Negro child has failed to perceive the past-tense meaning of a written verb having it than reading He hit me yesterday aloud is an indication that the speaker of standard English has failed to perceive the past-tense meaning of hit. Clearly, the requirements for acceptable reading aloud must be distinguished from the requirements for effective reading comprehension.

Even in those cases in which phonological differences between Negro dialect and standard English look like they ought to make phonological identification of the written word more difficult for the Negro-dialect speaker, and thus interfere with reading comprehension, this may not always turn out to be so. For, if the differences are regular enough, which they often are, then the Negro-dialect speaker may be able to set up his own sound-spelling correspondences between them -- ones which will be different from those set up by a speaker of standard English, but which will allow effective word identification nevertheless. For example, most varieties of Negro dialect regularly have /f/ and /v/ where standard English has /θ/ and /ð/, respectively. And the standard-English sounds are regularly represented in the written language by *th* (usually standing for the voiceless /θ/, but also for the voiced /ð/ in certain circumstances). But the fair amount of regularity between standard English /θ/ and /ð/ and Negro dialect /f/ and /v/ on the one hand, and standard English /θ/ and /ð/ and the spelling *th* on the other allows the Negro-dialect speaker to set up his own reading rule which tells him, in effect, "Read /f/ (or, in certain circumstances, /v/) for *th*, when not at the beginning of a word." Thus, he will read /bref/ for *breath* and, with the additional knowledge that *th* before final *e* usually stands for the voiced counterpart, he should read /briyv/ for *breathe*. And, since /bref/ and /briyv/ are exactly his functional equivalents of standard English /breθ/ and /briyð/, the correct word identification of *breath* and *breathe*, in terms of his own spoken vocabulary, will be made.[21] For the reading of word-initial *th*, other reading rules would be set up, since the Negro-dialect reflexes of initial /θ/ and /ð/ in standard English are more complicated.[22]

If, as the foregoing observations seem to indicate, the adverse effects of purely phonological differences between Negro dialect and standard English on reading comprehension are but slight, then the case for structural interference in a Negro-dialect speaker's attempts to read standard English will have to be made on other linguistic grounds. A substantial number of lexical differences between the two kinds of English would serve this purpose, but one of the striking features of the relationship between urban Negro dialect and standard English is that it involves very little lexical divergence. Consequently, if there really is significant dialect interference in the reading process, it can be expected to derive from grammatical differences between Negro dialect and standard English, and particularly from ones which are more or less independent of non-significant (for reading) phonological differences.

There are actually many grammatical differences between Negro dialect and standard English which, whether caused by different transformations or by different grammatical processes of a "deeper" type, are nevertheless clearly independent of regular phonological differences between the two kinds of English.[23] Examples of transformationally-derived grammatical differences are encountered in the use of question-type inversion in Negro-dialect verb phrases where standard English uses _if_ (meaning "whether") with no inversion, e.g. _See can he go_ for _See if he can go_, uninverted verb phrases after certain question words in Negro dialect where standard English requires inversion, e.g. _What it is?_ for _What is it?_, and multiple negation in Negro dialect where standard English has single negation, e.g. _He ain't never bought none_ for _He hasn't ever bought any_ or _He has never bought any_.[24] As with many of the regular phonological differences between Negro dialect and standard English, the Negro-dialect speaker is usually able to establish correspondences between grammatical differences of this type -- provided, of course, that the context is clear and that such constructions do not pile up in rapid succession. But even so, misinterpretation is quite possible when a standard-English construction happens to resemble in form some Negro-dialect construction other than the one to which it is functionally equivalent.

For example, a seemingly unambiguous standard-English sentence like His eye's open may be misinterpreted by a Negro-dialect speaker as meaning "His eyes are open", simply because it resembles in form the Negro dialect sentence His eyes open (with that meaning) more than it does His eye open (the Negro-dialect equivalent of the original standard-English sentence). And this, incidentally, is yet another example of a case in which viva-voce performance would be of no help to the reading teacher in deciding whether there was a misinterpretation or not, since the pupil's pronunciation of standard English His eye's open and Negro dialect His eyes open would be identical.

Intelligibility problems of a different order -- at once more subtle and more ingrained -- are posed by grammatical differences between Negro dialect and standard English which originate deeper in the respective grammars than do differences of the preceding type. Because they are not likely to involve simple one-to-one correlations, and because they may not even use the same perceptual information about the real world, these deeper grammatical differences are apt to lie beyond the scope of the intuitive methods by which speakers of one dialect normally determine structural equivalences between their own and some other dialect. It is this type of grammatical difference which underlies the dissimilar use of be in Negro dialect and standard English. In Negro dialect, be is used with adjectives and the -in' (= -ing) form of verbs to indicate an extended or repeated state or action, e.g. He be busy, He be workin'. On the other hand, the absence of this be usually indicates that the state or action is immediate or momentary, e.g. He busy, He workin'. The auxiliary or tag for be in Negro dialect is do, e.g. Do he be busy? as a question form of He be busy, while the explicit form use in the non-be construction is usually is, e.g. Is he busy?

as a question form of *He busy*. This means, of course, that *be* and *is* are entirely different morphemes in Negro dialect. But in standard English, there is no such grammatical distinction, and *be* and *is* are merely inflectional variants of one and the same verb. Thus, for the two grammatical constructions of Negro dialect, standard English has but one grammatical equivalent, e.g. *He is busy*, *He is working*, in which the immediacy or duration of the state or action is left entirely unspecified.

Thus far, this difference between Negro dialect and standard English in the grammatical recognition or not of a contrast between extended or repeated states and actions and immediate or momentary ones may seem to have little significance for reading comprehension, since the Negro-dialect speaker is obviously not going to encounter his own *He busy* and *He be busy* constructions (which mark the distinction) in a standard-English text. In form, the closest standard-English constructions to these will be the *He is busy* type, which is functionally equivalent to both of the Negro-dialect constructions, and the *He will be busy* type, which represents a future state or action only. Now, if this were indeed the extent of the matter, it would certainly be reasonable to assume that the differences in form between the standard-English and Negro-dialect constructions would alert the average Negro-dialect speaker to a possible difference in meaning between them. But one more bit of information is necessary to a full understanding of just how much such a seemingly minor grammatical difference can affect intelligibility. This is that exposure to the standard-English use of present-tense forms of the copula (i.e. *am*, *is*, *are*) has made many speakers of nonstandard Negro dialect -- even very young ones -- aware that their own *He busy* and *He be busy* types of construction are not "proper" in form. Consequently, they often attempt to "correct" these on their own by adding one or another of the standard English auxiliaries to their *He busy* type of construction, and by changing the *be* of their *He be busy* type of construction into *bees* (on analogy with correcting *he work* to *he works*) and, when they realize that even this is nonstandard, into *will be*.[26] Now, even assuming that those who do this will always end up with forms like *He is busy* (with appropriate person accord of the auxiliary throughout) for *He busy*, and *He will be busy* for *He be busy*, it is nevertheless the case that these phonologically and morphologically "standard" forms are still nonstandard Negro dialect in their grammar and meaning. This means that Negro-dialect speakers -- even ones who appear to know "correct" grammar -- are apt to misread standard-English *He is busy* constructions as necessarily implying immediacy (which they do not), and *He will be busy* constructions as possibly indicating repetition or long duration (which they do not) as well as futurity.

Taken altogether, the grammatical differences between Negro dialect and standard English are probably extensive enough to cause reading-comprehension problems. Even in cases where the differences do not actually obscure the meaning of a sentence or passage, they can be distracting to a young Negro-dialect speaker who is trying to learn to read, and who can find but few familiar syntactic patterns to aid him in word identification. It is true that this child must eventually be taught to read standard-English sentence patterns, but it is open to question whether he should be made to cope with the task of deciphering unfamiliar syntactic structures at the very same time that he is expected to develop effective word-reading skills. One simple way to avoid placing a double learning load on the lower-class Negro child who is learning to read would be to start with sentence patterns which are familiar to him -- ones from his own dialect -- and then move to unfamiliar ones from standard English once he has mastered the necessary word-reading skills. In that way, reading ability could actually become an aid to the learning of standard English.

A third objection which might well be raised to the use of Negro dialect in beginning reading materials is that it would reinforce the use by lower-class Negro children of their nonstandard dialect, and thereby serve as a barrier to their eventual acquisition of standard English. But such a claim would be predicated on two false assumptions about language learning and language use. The first false assumption is that the use of language patterns always constitutes reinforcement of those patterns in the user. Although this is a popular belief among educators, it is obviously untrue for native speakers of a language (or a particular variety of a language) who are using familiar patterns of it. If a standard-English speaker is asked to repeat (or read) a sentence like Charles and Michael are out playing, he will not know either the sentence pattern or the individual words any better when he is through than before he started. The reason is, of course, that he already knows these aspects of his language as well as he could possibly learn them. If this is so, then why is it assumed that, if a Negro-dialect speaker is allowed to say (or asked to read) a sentence like Charles an' Michael, dey out playin', he will thereby become more addicted to Negro dialect? And what sort of magic is a classroom supposed to have, anyway, that the occasional use of nonstandard pronunciations or sentence patterns within its confines is regarded as pregnant with potential effect, while the almost exclusive use of those same pronunciations and sentence patterns outside the classroom is regarded as of little consequence? The second false assumption underlying this particular argument is that the knowledge and use of one language or dialect precludes the learning and use of another language or dialect -- or, put more simply, that people's capacity for learning and using different linguistic systems is severely limited. This is a particularly common belief in America, where very few educators have had any exposure to multilingualism or bidialectalism. But Europeans would be likely to be astonished or amused by such an assertion, since most of them accept it as a matter of course that one will use a nonstandard dialect in the village home and a standardized variety of the same language (or even a different language) in the city office. The fact is that, in America too, there is no linguistic reason why an individual ought not to be able to produce sentences like _Charles an' Michael, dey out playin'_ in one situation, and _Charles and Michael are out playing_ in another. Poor language teaching, rather than the prior knowledge of another language or dialect, is the principal cause of unsuccessful bilingualism or bidialectalism.

Instead of being ignored or made the target of an eradication program, Negro dialect should actually be used as a basis for teaching oral and written standard English. If Negro dialect is used to teach initial word-reading skills to Negro-dialect speakers, then those word-reading skills can be made the constant in terms of which standard-English grammatical patterns can be taught through reading and writing. One form which this type of language teaching could take would be to make the transition from Negro dialect to standard English in a series of stages, each of which would concentrate on a limited set of linguistic differences. An exciting aspect of this approach is that oral language teaching could be combined with the reading program to any degree felt useful. Take, for example, the Negro-dialect sentence just cited, and its standard-English counterpart. The former would become the initial stage in such a program, and the latter would be the ultimate goal. In this illustration, I will write the Negro-dialect sentence in standard-English spelling in order to simplify the transition process.

STAGE 1

Charles and Michael, they out playing.

Grammatically, sentences at this stage will be pure nonstandard Negro dialect. The vocabulary, also, will be controlled so that no words which are unfamiliar to a Negro-dialect-speaking child will appear. Thus, all linguistic aspects of text will be familiar to the beginning reader, and his full attention can be focused on learning to read the vocabulary. At this stage, no attempt should be made to teach standard-English pronunciations of the words, since the sentence in which they appear is not standard English.

STAGE 2

Charles and Michael, they are out playing.

At this stage, the most important grammatical features of standard English are introduced. In the example, there is one such feature -- the copula. Apart from that, the vocabulary is held constant. Oral-language drills could profitably be used to teach person accord of the copula (*am*, *is*, *are*), and some standard-English pronunciations of the basic vocabulary might be taught.

STAGE 3

Charles and Michael are out playing.

Grammatically, the sentences at this stage are brought into full conformity with standard English by making the remaining grammatical and stylistic adjustments. In the example, the "double subject" of the nonstandard form is eliminated. Oral-language drills could be used to teach this, and additional standard-English pronunciations of the basic vocabulary could be taught.

Although the complete transition from Negro-dialect grammar to standard-English grammar was effected in three stages in the foregoing example, more stages would probably be required in a real program of this type. The actual programming of these stages would have to be carried out by competent linguists, but, once done, the resulting materials ought to be usable in regular remedial-reading classes.

The fourth objection which might be made to the use of written Negro-dialect materials in the school is that it is insulting to Negroes. In part, this view may stem from the mistaken notion that Negro dialect is nothing but "sloppy" speech -- a sort of half-language -- the use of which might be taken as evidence of low intellectual achievement in the Negro.[26] But another possible reason why written materials in Negro dialect might be regarded by many as damaging to the Negro image could be an assumption that such materials are merely a continuation of literary Negro stereotypes of the sort which have appeared over the years in stories, jokes, cartoons, etc., and which have undoubtedly served as entertainment for countless numbers of white racists. That the Negro dialect of many of these stereotypic representations of lower-class Negroes was often more accurate than many middle-class Negroes or liberal whites realize or would care to admit further complicates the matter, since structural similarities between the Negro dialect of literary stereotypes and that of pedagogical materials might be misconstrued as evidence that language of the pedagogical materials has been based on that of literary stereotypes. And, of course, there will be the inevitable visceral reaction of many upwardly-mobile Negroes against any public recognition of distinctively Negro behaviors -- particularly those which cannot, like Negro musicality, be easily transvalued into "soul". Often near-white culturally and linguistically, Negroes of this type frequently attempt to pass themselves off on the white power structure as representatives of the culturally and linguistically non-white Negro school child, and as natural authorities on his background and learning problems. At the same time, many of these same Negroes are inordinately fond of boasting to anyone who will listen that they never spoke nonstandard dialect, as if the truth of such a statement were indicative of anything more than their total unfamiliarity with the very kinds of pedagogical problems which they claim to know so much about. (Indeed, when some middle-class Negroes do attempt to demonstrate a knowledge of Negro dialect, it more often than not turns out to be a combination of standard-English grammar and pedagogically-irrelevant ethnic slang.) Recently, some of these culturally and linguistically near-white Negroes have even tried to turn "instant black" through superficial conformity to the styles and rhetoric of the Black Power movement -- their assumption apparently being that, in the eyes of the white establishment, a bush and a dashiki are adequate substitutes for knowledge in qualifying as an authority on Negro educational needs. And, given the fact that the white-dominated educational establishment is more committed to the political goal of placating middle-class Negro social grievances than the professional goal of fulfilling lower-class Negro educational needs (and is probably even unaware that there could be a difference), they may be right. The danger is that Negroes who are embarrassed by or hostile to Negro dialect may attempt to abort its use in the school curriculum by any of a number of strategies, such as reiterating the conventional view that Negro dialect is nothing more than a mass of unstructured speech errors, or by claiming that Negro dialect of the type depicted by linguists is either rare or non-existent among black school children, or, if all else fails, by the irresponsible yet, to liberal whites, intimidating charge that anyone who works on the theory that American Negroes and whites have different configurations of behavior is a racist.

If the more pessimistic of these expectations turns out to be well-founded, and numbers of articulate Negroes do move to force school administrators into bypassing or abandoning programs using Negro dialect, the day will not be saved for these programs by white linguists. For they, like other white social scientists, are as easily intimidated by political pressure from blacks as white school administrators are. Rather, the day will be saved by other Negroes -- ones who, often coming from a lower-class background, are aware that cultural and linguistic differences do exist between American whites and blacks, who accept the fact, and who want to use it as a point of departure for increased self-awareness and inter-ethnic understanding. Even more articulate than their white-oriented, middle-class counterparts, Negroes with this new awareness know that such differences are not indications of intellectual superiority or inferiority, but are rather exciting indications of unique and equally worthy culture histories. They recognize that, because of these differences, Negro and white children will often have unique performance characteristics and curriculum needs in school, but they see that American education has traditionally recognized and adjusted itself only to those of the white children. As a result, it is with some justification that many of these Negroes regard the American school system as a singularly colonialist institution -- one having only slightly more relevance for lower-class American Negro children than the British educational system had for native children in Africa and India. Negroes who are developing this awareness -- and their numbers are increasing every day -- are simply not going to sit idly by while white-oriented Negroes attack the very kind of curriculum which would set this situation right. For their own good, school administrators, curriculum planners, textbook publishers, and program funders had better learn to distinguish between these two types of Negroes, if only to the extent of realizing that the opinion of a "colored" friend, associate, or colleague on Negro-dialect materials may not necessarily be an inside tip on the feelings of Negroes at large.

Linguists, for their part, ought to be more concerned about the suitability of a particular set of Negro-dialect reading materials for a particular population of Negro children than about the popularity of such materials among Negro adults. The materials will be accepted by the children if they are authentic -- that is, if the written language of the materials represents accurately their own spoken language. For the linguist, this authenticity will only come about through careful attention to details of grammar, style, and vocabulary. And the materials will be accepted by Negro parents and other adults when they see that Negro children learn to read standard English by means of them, where they did not by means of traditional reading materials. For the linguist, the ability of the materials to do this will require meticulous planning of the structural changes which are to be dealt with in each of the successive stages from "pure" nonstandard dialect to "pure" standard English. Finally, if it can be argued, as it has been in this paper, that beginning reading materials in standard English are not suitable for children who only speak nonstandard Negro dialect, then it should be equally apparent that beginning reading materials in nonstandard Negro dialect will not be suitable for children who only speak standard English. In particular, one should guard against the danger of assuming that Negro-dialect materials will be appropriate for all Negro school children. Earlier, it was pointed out that most middle-class Negroes do not (and, indeed, many cannot) speak nonstandard Negro dialect. Although this fact cannot serve as an argument that Negro dialect is rare or non-existent, it certainly is an indication that not all Negroes speak Negro dialect. Even among lower-class Negroes, some individuals (particularly females) will be found who, either due to a special life history or because of strong upward mobility, have acquired and use standard English. And, of course, there will be individuals who speak something between standard English and the type of nonstandard dialect I have characterized as "pure" Negro dialect. This does not make Negro-dialect materials any the less useful for children who actually speak Negro dialect; it merely means that any Negro-dialect reading program will have to have an instrument for determining exactly who does, and who doesn't, speak Negro dialect in the first place. And if such an instrument could actually measure a child's initial language on a Negro-dialect-to-standard-English continuum, then it would also be useful for measuring that child's progress in standard English as a result of the staging process of the materials. Although still in an embryonic state, the bidialectal oral-language proficiency test designed by Joan C. Baratz and myself is potentially ideal for this purpose.[27] Even children whose initial language is shown by such a test to be somewhere in between "pure" Negro dialect and standard English can be worked into such a program if, as ought to be the case, the language of its intermediate stages is made to resemble the intermediate dialects in a Negro speech community. Thus, a particular child might be started with, say, Stage Two materials rather than Stage One materials.

Once the decision has been made to develop beginning reading materials using Negro dialect for a particular school population, then a suitable orthography must be selected for the nonstandard sentence patterns. This is an unavoidable problem, since any nonstandard dialect is, by its very nature, unwritten. But it is an important problem, since the effective use of a nonstandard dialect in a bidialectal reading program will depend to a great extent on how easy the orthographic transition between the two linguistic systems can be made. For Negro dialect, four major types of orthography are available to choose from. These are:

1. An autonomous phonemic orthography, in which words are spelled the way they are pronounced (or heard) by a speaker of the dialect. For example, if a Negro-dialect speaker normally pronounces his equivalents of standard English bend and bending /ben/ and /bendin/, then these words will be spelled so as to show these pronunciations, sound-by-sound, e.g. ben and bendin.
2. A systematic phonemic orthography, which attempts to have the spellings represent all the information necessary to determine changes which can occur in the pronunciation of words in different contexts. For example, this type of orthography would spell the Negro-dialect equivalent of standard English bend in a way which would show that a /d/ is pronounced in the word when a vowel follows (as it does with the suffix /-in/), while the same is not true for a word like /mown/, for standard English moan, i.e. /mownin/. This could be accomplished simply by spelling the Negro-dialect form /ben/ as bend, with a "reading

rule" that d after n is pronounced only before a vowel.

3. A literary-dialect orthography, in which the purely dialectal pronunciations of Negro-dialect words are roughly indicated by minor changes in the traditional spellings of their standard-English cognates. One important device used in literary dialect is the apostrophe, which is substituted for certain letters to show that a particular sound usually pronounced in a standard-English form is not pronounced in its Negro-dialect equivalent (e.g. ben' for standard English bend), or to indicate sound substitutions (e.g. bendin' with final /n/ for standard English bending with final /ŋ/). The examples of Negro dialect which were given in the earlier discussion of grammatical interference were written in a literary-dialect orthography.
4. An unmodified standard-English orthography, with no effort made to indicate differences in pronunciation between Negro dialect and standard English. For example, the spellings bend and bending would be used in writing both varieties of English. The Negro dialect in the poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" was written in this way, as was that in the three-stage example of transitional reading materials.

The first two types of orthography are the most scientific, since they both attempt to indicate the pronunciation of the dialect accurately, and in its own terms. Each of these systems has its advocates and its detractors, who will be happy to point out its strengths and weaknesses.[28] An autonomous phonemic orthography has the advantage of being applicable to a language or dialect as soon as certain basic facts are known about its sound system, and long before much is understood about contextual variations in the structure of words. It is largely for this reason that most of the orthographies which have been devised in connection with basic literacy programs around the world have been autonomous phonemic ones. On the other hand, a systematic phonemic orthography has the advantage of representing the relationship between variant pronunciations of words much more adequately than is possible in an autonomous phonemic orthography, and hence tends to relate more closely to grammatical processes in the language or dialect. A distinct disadvantage of systematic phonemic orthographies, however, is that they can only be as well-formed as the state of knowledge concerning the lexicon and morphophonemics of the particular language or dialect will allow. And, since the lexicon of even a "primitive" language can be quite vast, and the morphophonemics of even a "simple" dialect quite complex, that knowledge is seldom ever as complete as it ought to be for devising a permanent orthography. Accordingly, attempts to create such orthographies are likely to be characterized by a certain degree of instability, engendered by constant additions, corrections, and revisions.

The last two types of orthography are, from a phonological point of view, at least, much less scientific than the first two. While a literary-dialect orthography does attempt to indicate Negro-dialect pronunciations, this is seldom done either consistently or in the dialect's own terms.[29] And Negro dialect which has been spelled entirely in the standard-English fashion will offer no clues at all as to its unique pronunciations. Rather, the effect of these two types of orthography is to show the relationship of the one form of English to the other. A literary-dialect orthography, with its altered spellings and ubiquitous apostrophe, emphasizes the dialect's phonological deviations from standard-English norms, and can create an impression of great difference -- even without accommodating the actual dialect syntax.[30] The writing of Negro dialect in an unmodified standard-English orthography, on the other hand, obscures the phonological differences between the two and, as a result, highlights whatever syntactic differences are incorporated into the writing of the sentences.

In evaluating the relative utility of these four types of orthography for writing Negro dialect in a reading program designed to phase into standard English, it is ironic that the least satisfactory one is that which has proven most effective in basic literacy programs involving only one language or dialect at a time: the autonomous phonemic orthography. What renders this type of orthography unsuitable for the task at hand is that, precisely because it would represent the sounds of Negro dialect accurately and in the dialect's own terms, it would produce Negro-dialect word spellings which would be too foreign to the spellings of standard-English cognates to permit an easy transition from reading and writing the one to reading and writing the other.[31]

Both a systematic phonemic orthography and a literary-dialect orthography would have essentially the same drawbacks as an autonomous phonemic orthography, though conceivably to a lesser degree. But the main argument against both of these types of orthography is their complexity; the prospective reader would probably do better to spend his time and effort mastering the intricacies of the standard-English orthographic system. And, given what was said earlier about the ability of the Negro-dialect speaker to set up his own sound-spelling correspondences between Negro-dialect pronunciations and standard-English word spellings, the writing of Negro dialect in an unmodified standard-English orthography ought not to cause more problems than it avoids.[32]

Apart from the obvious necessity of using the nonstandard ain't and common contractions like it's, don't, won't, can't, etc., in writing Negro dialect in a standard-English type of orthography, I would make one major compromise in the direction of a literary-dialect orthography. That would be to indicate, by an apostrophe, those cases in Negro dialect in which a word must take a prefix in order to become like its standard-English equivalent, e.g. Negro dialect *'bout*, *'cause*, *'round*, and *'posed to* for standard English *about*, *because*, *around*, and *supposed to*. In the Negro-dialect materials, word-initial apostrophes would thereby become graphic indicators of specific lexical points at which later morphological expansion of the Negro-dialect forms would have to be carried out in the transition to standard English.[33] The usefulness of this technique lies in the fact that Negro-dialect speakers do not always know that a prefix is "missing" from their version of a particular word. Thus, the Negro-dialect form *'most* (cf. standard English *almost*), as in *'most always*, *'most everybody*, is either left that way when "proper" English is attempted, or it may be "corrected" with a suffix, -*ly*, rather than with a prefix. Although this latter step creates no conflict in meaning for the Negro-dialect speaker (since his normal equivalent of standard English *mostly* is *most of...*, e.g. *Most of it ruined* and *They most of them teachers* for standard English *It has mostly spoiled* and *They are mostly teachers*), it does produce sequences like *mostly always* and *mostly everybody* which are incongruous and comical when interpreted as standard English. But even when Negro-dialect speakers do suspect that some sort of suffix is required to make a particular word into standard English, they may not be at all sure which standard-English prefix is required; or they may be sure, but be mistaken. Negro-dialect speakers may know, for example, that their forms *'cord*, *'morial*, and *'vorce* all require a prefix in "proper" usage, but then they are likely to overuse *re-* (by far the most functional prefix in Negro dialect) to produce the "corrected" forms record, remorial, and revorce, with only one matching with standard English record (verb), memorial, and divorce -- and that a fortuitous one. In effect, this persistent confusion which many Negro-dialect speakers experience with standard-English pretonic syllables (often in spite of "hearing" the appropriate forms from middle-class speakers from time to time) suggests that it would be of little use to write almost, record, memorial, divorce, etc., in beginning reading materials for Negro-dialect speakers, with the hope that they would somehow "pick up" the right usage from the spellings. It would seem more effective to write such words as 'most, 'cord, 'morial, 'vorce, etc., in at least the initial stage of such materials, so that the learner could first become familiar with the reading of their "stems" in terms of his own pronunciation patterns, and only then to teach the appropriate standard-English prefixes by means of supplementary spoken drills, preparatory to introducing the standard-English spellings into the written text.[34]

To close this paper, I have written a very short story, which I call "Shirley and the Valentine Card", to show what the written Negro dialect of the initial (i.e. the most nonstandard) stage of a Negro-dialect-to-standard-English reading program might look like, to serve notice on normativists that standard English has no monopoly on expressiveness, and to reassure the socio-politically timid that even radically nonstandard Negro dialect will turn out to be comfortably unobtrusive if dialectal spellings are used sparingly enough. I have not gone so far as to structure the text of the story, as it ought to be in a reading program, by presenting sound-spelling-meaning correspondences in a systematic way, or by organizing the distinctive structural features of the dialect in a way which will facilitate their staging into standard

English. Rather, I present this story simply as a sample of the language of the story. To that end, I immediately follow it with a few specific comments on some of its features.

SHIRLEY AND THE VALENTINE CARD

It's a girl name Shirley Jones live in Washington. 'Most everybody on her street like her, 'cause she a nice girl. And all the children Shirley be with in school like her, too. Shirley treat all of them just like they was her sisters and brothers, but most of all she like one boy name Charles. Shirley, she be knowing Charles 'cause all two of them in the same grade, and he in her class. But Shirley keep away from Charles most of the time, 'cause she start to liking him so much she be scared of him. And that make it seem to Charles like she don't pay him no mind. So Charles, he don't hardly say nothing to her neither. Still, that girl got to go 'round telling everybody Charles 'posed to be liking her. She act like she his girlfriend, too.

But when Valentine Day start to come 'round, Shirley get to worrying. She worried 'cause she know the rest of them girls all going get Valentine cards from their boyfriends. And she know when them girls find out she ain't get a card from Charles, they going say she been telling a story 'bout Charles being her boyfriend. So she keep on thinking 'bout that and worrying all day long, even at school when she 'posed to be learning something from the teacher and playing with the other girls. That Shirley, she so worried, she just don't want to be with nobody. She even walk home by her own self, when school let out.

When Shirley get home, her mother say it's a letter for her on the table. Right away Shirley start to wondering who could it be from, 'cause she know don't nobody 'posed to be sending her no kind of letter. It do have her name on the front, though. It say, Shirley Jones. So Shirley, she open the envelope up. And when she do, she can see it's a Valentine card inside. Now, Shirley take out the card, and she look at it, and she see it have Charles name wrote on the bottom.

See, Charles really been liking her all the time, even though he ain't never tell her nothing 'bout it. So now everything going be all right for Shirley, 'cause what she been telling everybody 'bout Charles being her boyfriend ain't story after all. It done come true!

Comments on the Language of the Story

Although Negro-dialect speakers often narrate their stories in a past-time setting, I have deliberately put "Shirley and the Valentine Card" in the somewhat less common (though still appropriate) simple present throughout. This is a useful strategy to employ in the writing of initial-stage reading materials, since it eliminates the need for introducing nonstandard past-tense verb forms, some of which would definitely require dialectal spellings, and allows for the systematic introduction of standard-English past-tense verb forms at a later time.

The language of the story is essentially a representation, in the kind of standard-English orthography I have advocated, of a variety of nonstandard dialect which is used by many lower-class Negro children in the District of Columbia -- the scene of the story.[35] As it stands, this kind of Negro dialect is almost identical to that of similar children in such Eastern Seaboard cities as Baltimore, Wilmington, Philadelphia, and New York. The language of the story is fairly "pure" Negro dialect, with features from standard English kept to a somewhat artificial minimum (since, after all, the idea would be to introduce these systematically in the course of the reading program of which such a story would be part). On the other hand, because this story is arbitrarily directed to the 10-to-15-year-old range, a number of even more deviant features of the speech of younger children have been omitted, such as possessive pronouns which (except for the first person singular) are undifferentiated in form from the corresponding subject pronouns, e.g. he girlfriend, she boyfriend for his girlfriend, her boyfriend. If materials were being developed for much younger children, or for regions in which such features occur in a wider age range (in coastal South Carolina, Georgia, or Florida, for example), the dialect forms could be modified accordingly.[36]

The other regional limitations in the linguistic structure of "Shirley and the Valentine Card" are really quite minor. A marked characteristic of the dialect used is that verbs in the simple present do not usually take a suffix -s for any person subject.[37] But in some other varieties of Negro dialect, particularly those spoken in the South Central states (Mississippi, Alabama, etc.), the simple present verb is more often marked with -s for all persons, e.g. I lives in Jackson. Also, although no examples of possessive noun constructions appear in the story, South Central Negro dialect often uses a possessive suffix like standard English, e.g. Shirley's boyfriend, where Eastern Seaboard Negro dialect simply uses noun apposition, e.g. Shirley boyfriend. Finally, in the Negro dialect of the District of Columbia, as in most of the Eastern Seaboard, got (or gots) and 'posed to take do (negative don't) as an auxiliary or tag, e.g. Do you got a dollar?, Don't they 'posed to go with you?, while in South Central usage the auxiliary or tag for these verbs is usually is (negative ain't), e.g. Is you got a dollar?, Ain't they 'posed to go with you? But the fact that, in general, the language of "Shirley and the Valentine Card" is as close as it is to the speech of Negroes of a comparable age and socio-economic level in so many parts of the United States shows rather clearly that Negro dialect from South to North, from East to West, from farm to city, and from storefront church to playground, is all part of a single sociolinguistic complex, with a single historical origin, and reveals the emptiness of the claim of some traditionalist educators that Negro speech varies too much from place to place for it to be a useful pedagogical tool.[38]

What I have had to say about Negro dialect in the course of this paper should make it obvious that it is a highly complex yet well-formed and systematic code -- just like any other language. To speak it well, or to use it effectively in pedagogical materials, requires a profound knowledge of its many phonological and grammatical rules, of subtle lexical differences (e.g. that bright means "light-skinned" in Negro dialect, while it means "clever" in standard English), and of countless stylistic and idiomatic details (e.g. that sisters and brothers is the "pure" Negro-dialect form, while brothers and sisters is an importation from standard English). This means that attempts to use or to write Negro dialect should not be made by unqualified persons, black or white, any more than attempt to use or write, say, French should be. For one thing, the inner-city slang or "hip talk" of teenagers and young adults should not be confused with Negro dialect in the linguistic sense, no matter how ethnically-correlated many of the slang terms may be. They are simply deliberate vocabulary substitutions, and have nothing directly to do with dialect grammar or phonology. Nor is the "stage dialect" of Negro bit-players on radio, television, or the screen necessarily close to real Negro dialect. Often, in order to insure its being understood by a wide audience, a stage Negro dialect may be created which is little more than standard English with a slightly ethnicized or southernized pronunciation, reinforced by the insertion of such general nonstandardisms as ain't and the double negative, and perhaps a sprinkling of southern or inner-city Negro lexical usages like honey child or man.[39] And, although literary renditions of plantation Negro dialect (such as appears in Joel Chandler Harris' Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings) may represent an older form of Negro dialect rather accurately, and thus share many structural characteristics with present-day Negro dialect, there are still too many intervening variables (nineteenth-century usage vs. twentieth-century usage, adult speech vs. child speech, rural forms vs. urban forms, story-telling style vs. colloquial style, etc.) for that kind of Negro dialect to be directly useful for the purposes I have been suggesting.[40] If used well by educators, living Negro dialect can serve as a bridge between the personal experiences of the Negro child and his acquisition of mainstream language skills. If used poorly, however, it will only add to the confusion of pupil and teacher alike. The language of the Negro child can be made an effective educational tool, but it must be treated with respect and understanding.

NOTES

1. Most of the world's languages consist of more than one variety, with different varieties (called dialects by linguists) having developed in different regions, or among different social groups. The dialects of a language can differ from each other in various details of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Every dialect is systematic and logical in its own terms, and a grammar and dictionary of it could conceivably be written.

For most languages, however, only one or so of the total number of existing dialects ever comes to be regarded as "correct" or "proper" usage (linguists call such a dialect the *standard* one), with normative grammars and dictionaries based upon it. Consequently, the structural characteristics of other dialects which deviate from the standard one are generally regarded as errors, rather than as differences; and when they are deviant enough, such dialects (called *nonstandard* dialects by linguists) may be popularly deprecated as "bad" or "improper" speech, with the implication that they have no structural or historical justification. Now, the chances of a normal child who reaches school age having mislearned the language used around him are infinitely smaller than the chances that he might have learned accurately a nonstandard dialect. Therefore, educators should be much less prone than they have been to infer that schoolchild speech which deviates from the pedagogical norm necessarily implies poor language learning.

2. For a discussion of current theory on this aspect of human language competence, see Eric H. Lenneberg, *The Biological Foundations of Language* (New York: John Wiley, 1967).

3. For obvious reasons, the congenitally deaf do not acquire spoken language in this way. However, those having early contact with persons who use a manual sign analogue of oral language (such as deaf parents or deaf playmates) may acquire this sign language in a way and at a rate which is strikingly similar to the hearing child's acquisition of spoken language. In this sense, even the congenitally deaf turn out to be linguistically normal.

4. In pointing this out, I am not suggesting that the adoption of a single language, either imported or indigenous, as a national language by a multilingual nation is necessarily an unwise step. There are often many advantages in such a policy. At the same time, it means that literacy strategies in such a situation cannot be identical to those which would be appropriate for a monolingual country, or for a multilingual country in which most of the languages are written and officially recognized.

5. See William A. Bull, "The Use of Vernacular Languages in Fundamental Education", *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 21:288-294 (1955), reprinted in Dell Hymes, ed., *Language in Culture and Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964); and Nancy Modiano, "National or Mother Language

in Beginning Reading: A Comparative Study", Research in the Teaching of English, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 1968), pp. 32-43.

6. The i.t.a., phonics, and other "linguistic" methods of teaching beginning reading deal primarily with such minimal written vs. spoken code differences.

7. For a thoughtful critique of the recent literature on this issue, see Ralph Mason Dreger and Kent S. Miller, "Comparative Psychological Studies of Negroes and Whites in the United States: 1959-1965", Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 70, No. 3, Part 2 (September 1968).

8. A classic example of this kind of psychological formulation of deficit theory, with its superficial sophistication and hidden defects, is the much-cited and influential article by Vera P. John, "The Intellectual Development of Slum Children: Some Preliminary Findings", American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 33, No. 5 (October 1963). In her study, John measured what she thought to be differences in verbal and classificatory skills in three socio-economic groups of Negro children (lower-lower, upper-lower, and middle-class) through their performance on a series of standardized verbal and non-verbal tests, including the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test. Differences in the performance of the three groups led John to conclude that, among other things, "The acquisition of more abstract and integrative language seems to be hampered by the living conditions in the homes of the lower-class children." Quite apart from John's unsubstantiated statement that the problem-source was "the living conditions in the homes", she seems to have failed to grasp the true relationship of her tests to her subjects, and therefore the real meaning of her results. She showed no awareness that the Peabody test contains only standard-English linguistic forms, and that therefore it is a test of verbal ability only when applied to standard-English speaking subjects. And she showed no awareness that the Lorge-Thorndike test is based on middle-class heuristic styles, and that therefore it is a test of non-verbal intelligence only for members of the middle class. Thus, John failed to realize that her results might well indicate little more than differences in language forms and heuristic styles in her three groups (which she quite wrongly characterized as all belonging to "the same subculture"). I mention John's article specifically because it has been responsible for a great deal of

mischief in intervention programs since its publication, and because its recent reprinting in Gladys Natchez, ed., Children with Reading Problems (New York: Basic Books, 1968) is likely to give it the chance to do further mischief in the field of reading. The editor has countered the effect of John's article somewhat by reprinting with it the opposing view of Kenneth B. Clark, "The Cult of Cultural Deprivation: A Complex Social Phenomenon". The only question is, Will reading specialists perceive the fundamental philosophical difference between these two articles, and be able to judge which is closest to fact?

9. Judging from the current educational and social-activist rhetoric, it is widely assumed that a gut-level commitment to the principle of human equality constitutes the only special preparation necessary for teaching lower-class Negro children. This was the assumption under which the Port Royal experiment in freedman education was instigated in the first years of the Civil War; it was the assumption under which Negro education was carried out in the segregated school systems after Emancipation; and it has been the assumption under which most of the teaching of the "disadvantaged" has been carried out since desegregation. That these attempts at Negro education have failed with dismal regularity to match white education in quality and effect can certainly be explained, but the point is that the failure has occurred despite the long and heavy involvement of individuals having a genuine commitment to the egalitarian philosophy.

10. Throughout this paper, the term culture is used in the modern anthropological sense of a network of customs, values, beliefs, and lifeways associated with a particular social group or society. Culture may thus include such phenomena as material artifacts (e.g. dwellings, tools, clothing, ornaments), social institutions (e.g. family structure and kinship systems, political organizations, the church), values and belief systems (e.g. religion, codes of morality and etiquette, the world-view), and expressive behaviors (e.g. art, music, language, interaction styles). Cultural norms may be consciously specified and transmitted (as in the case of laws, rituals, and traditions), or their acquisition and use may be unconscious (as with particular ways of walking, holding one's body, laughing, and expressing embarrassment). The forms of one's language, too, are a part of one's culture, even though linguists prefer for practical reasons to describe language patterns separately from other kinds of cultural phenomena. And, as is true

with language, other basic aspects of one's culture can be learned quite independently of any formal instruction. In growing up in his society, a child may "pick up" many of the cultural patterns used around him quite early -- so early, in fact, that in later life he may not be able to recall ever having not known them. Indeed, when the cultural patterns thus acquired are used unconsciously, as in the way one walks or laughs, there may be no awareness that there is anything socially learned about them. Rather, the individual concerned is likely to have the impression that it is simply the "natural" way to walk, laugh, etc. Again as with language, any national culture may be divided into a number of sub-varieties, often correlated with geographical location or social sub-group membership within the nation. And, carrying the similarity still further, it is also usual that the norms of only one or so of these sub-cultures may come to be accepted by the larger society as the "right" way to behave. But the point is that many kinds of "wrong" behavior may derive from cultural differences, not cultural deficit. Thus, in spite of its current popularity among educators and social activists, the idea that the members of any population are "culturally deprived" is an anthropological absurdity.

11. Psychologists have, of course, been aware for some time that cultural differences could affect performance on standardized intelligence tests. Indeed, it was this awareness which touched off well-meant but largely unsuccessful attempts to develop useful "culture-fair" or "culture-free" intelligence tests during the 1940's and 1950's. The social-group classifications which psychologists recognized as having a potentially high correlation with cultural differences were social class (i.e. socio-economic status) and ethnicity (which they usually defined as membership in a social group of "foreign origin"). See, for example, Kenneth Eels, et al., Intelligence and Cultural Differences (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951). The problem was that psychologists found it difficult to place the American Negro accurately in this classification. Since he was obviously not a member of a social group of "foreign origin" in anything like the sense that Mexican-Americans, Pennsylvania Germans, or Ashkenazic Jews were, it seemed logical to consider his intellectual performance differences to be social-class derived. At the same time, psychologists were not quite ready to claim that Negroes performed just like whites of a comparable socio-economic level (which should have been the case, if the differences

were entirely due to social class), even though they rejected genetics as a factor in performance differences. The only alternative seemed to be the concept of cultural "differences" in the Negro as the product of cultural deficit. That is, "disadvantaged" Negroes were assumed to differ from whites, not in the kind of cultures they possessed, but rather in the amount of a presumably similar culture they possessed. And this position is still held by most psychologists today. For example, in the book of readings edited by A. Harry Passow, et al., Education of the Disadvantaged (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967), discussions of the Negro fairly drip with social pathology. One recent psychological study which has recognized American Negroes as a distinct ethnic group with cultural characteristics of its own, irrespective of social class, is that reported in Susan S. Stodolsky and Gerald S. Lesser, "Learning Patterns in the Disadvantaged", Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 37, No. 4, Fall 1967. Virtually all of the findings of this study have important implications for American education, but a particularly relevant one for the teaching of "disadvantaged" Negroes is that American Negroes of all socio-economic classes show a relatively high level of verbal ability. (Of the ethnicities studied by Stodolsky and Lesser, only Jews showed a higher level in this ability.) The implication that language skills enjoy an important place in American Negro social life will come as no surprise to the few social scientists and educators who know Negro life firsthand, but it certainly ought to startle the many who have theorized that the lower-class Negro child comes from a non-verbal background. On the other hand, one needn't take too seriously the opposition implied in Stodolsky and Lesser between "supportive" and "compensatory" education for different ethnic groups, since there is no reason why an adequate curriculum shouldn't contain elements of both. Indeed, the type of reading program which will be outlined in the course of the present article is at once supportive, in that it focusses on the relatively high verbal ability of Negroes, and compensatory, in that it develops reading skills which are not engendered by the ethnic subculture.

12. For the reader who is interested in pursuing further the matter of African acculturation in the New World, an important perspective is that found in Melville J. Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941).

13. See Lorenzo Dow Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), and Beryl Loftman Bailey, "Toward a New Perspective in Negro English Dialectology", *American Speech*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (October 1965).

14. For a pedagogically-oriented survey of the origin and development of nonstandard Negro dialects, see William A. Stewart, "Sociolinguistic Factors in the History of American Negro Dialects" and "Continuity and Change in American Negro Dialects", first published in *The Florida FL Reporter*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring 1967) and Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring 1968). Both are being reprinted in Harold B. Allen and Gary N. Underwood, eds., *Readings in American Dialectology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts [in press]) and, under the cover title "Toward a History of American Negro Dialects", in Frederick Williams, ed., *Language and Poverty: Perspectives on a Theme* (Chicago: Markham Publishing Co. [in press]).

15. See William A. Stewart, "Foreign Language Teaching Methods in Quasi-Foreign Language Situations" in W.A. Stewart, ed., *Non-Standard Speech and the Teaching of English* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1964); William A. Stewart, "Urban Negro Speech: Sociolinguistic Factors Affecting English Teaching" in R.W. Shuy, ed., *Social Dialects and Language Learning* (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965); William A. Stewart, "Nonstandard Speech Patterns", *Baltimore Bulletin of Education*, Vol. 43, Nos. 2-4 (1966-1967); J.L. Dillard, "The English Teacher and the Language of the Newly Integrated Student", *The Record -- Teachers College*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (November 1967); Marvin D. Loflin, "A Teaching Problem in Nonstandard Negro English", *English Journal* (December 1967).

16. In any language-teaching situation, it is important for educators to be acquainted with the extent to which more than one linguistic system is involved, as well as the extent to which the general population (represented by the students) is aware of whatever the case may be. Any two coterminously-used linguistic systems can range, insofar as the tendency of naïve speakers to equate one with the other is concerned, from a completely foreign-language relationship (in which the two are impressionistically dissimilar in all structural aspects), through a diglossic relationship (in which the two are structurally similar enough in some ways to be considered

varieties of the same language, though different enough in others to create serious interference problems), to a relationship of observable yet structurally trivial dialect variation. In the United States, the relationship of the more nonstandard varieties of Negro dialect to standard English is in many ways closer to diglossia than to normal dialect variation of the type which usually holds for white dialects. For this reason, I have occasionally lumped such situations together under the term "quasi-foreign language situations" (see the first item in note 15 above). For a discussion of the structural and functional aspects of true diglossia as it occurs in several parts of the world, see Charles A. Ferguson, "Diglossia", Word, Vol. 15, No. 2 (August 1959), and William A. Stewart, "The Functional Distribution of Creole and French in Haiti", Thirteenth Annual Round Table on Languages and Linguistics (= Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics, No. 15, Georgetown University, 1962).

17. See Tore Österberg, Bilingualism and the First School Language -- An Educational Problem Illustrated by Results from a Swedish Dialect Area (Umeå, Sweden: Västerbottens Tryckeri AB, 1961). Although only standard Swedish has traditionally been used in Swedish schools, many of the children who are educated in those schools come from districts in which the vernacular is a nonstandard Swedish dialect -- sometimes structurally quite different from the standard language. These children are expected to adjust to the language difference on their own, although the structural intricacies of standard Swedish often make the task almost impossible. The similarity of the plight of such children to that of Negro-dialect speakers in the United States will be apparent to anyone who reads the second chapter of Österberg's study.

18. The Urban Language Study, then under the direction of J.L. Dillard, was a study of the linguistic structure of the nonstandard dialect of Negro school children in the District of Columbia. I took the idea for a Negro-dialect translation of Moore's poem from the example of Emery Nemethy's "Kanaka Christmas" -- a delightful Hawaiian Pidgin English version which has been available on Christmas cards in my island homeland for many seasons.

19. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the first application of this linguistic view of dialect differences to reading theory was made in Peter S. Rosenbaum,

"Prerequisites for Linguistic Studies on the Effects of Dialect Differences on Learning to Read", Project Literacy Reports, No. 2 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1964). To illustrate his thesis that all dialects of English (including Negro dialect) differ from each other only in low-level transformations, Rosenbaum gave a few trivial and contrived examples of equivalent sentences from unspecified but presumably different dialect sources. At the same time, he ignored (and was probably unaware of) grammatical differences between dialects which could not easily be accounted for by low-level transformations (such as the he has broke it vs. he done broke it distinction of many rural white dialects). The one time Rosenbaum did specifically mention Negro dialect, it was to suggest that the difference between the Negro-dialect and standard-English use of the overt copula (e.g. is) was the result of "an extremely low-level transformational rule which deletes the copula [in Negro dialect] when it occurs in active non-negative present tense sentences." In order to make a statement like that, Rosenbaum had to be totally unaware of such contrasts as He sick vs. He be sick (the first meaning "He is temporarily ill" and the second "He is chronically ill") in Negro dialect -- a distinction which is simply not made in the standard-English equivalent for both of them: He is sick. Rosenbaum's observation was quite plausible as far as it went, but it only accounted for a part of the difference between the use of copula in Negro dialect and standard English. And, although I pointed out the existence of this grammatical difference between the two kinds of English in "Social Dialect", Research Planning Conference on Language Development in Disadvantaged Children (New York: Yeshiva University, 1966), Labov and Cohen still seemed to be uncertain about the function of be and the copula in Negro dialect and standard English in "Systematic Relations of Standard and Non-Standard Rules in the Grammars of Negro Speakers", Project Literacy Reports, No. 8 (1967).

20. This view of the reading problems of lower-class Negro children has been articulated most explicitly by William Labov in "Some Sources of Reading Problems for Negro Speakers of Non-Standard English" which originally appeared in Alexander Frazier, ed., New Directions in Elementary English (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967) [reprinted with additions and corrections in the present volume, pages 29-67]. So strong is Labov's adherence to the principle of phonological determinism in accounting for structural

differences between Negro dialect and standard English that at times the viability of his statements about the former seems to suffer. For example, after having theorized that differences in form between Negro-dialect possessive pronouns and their standard-English equivalents are due to a weakening or disappearance of final /r/ in Negro dialect (e.g. *you book*, *they book* for *your book*, *their book*), Labov makes the claim that "No one says *I book*, *he book*, *she book* or *we book*, for there is no phonological process which would bring the possessives into near-identity with the personal pronouns." Actually, possessive pronoun forms such as *me*, *he*, *she*, *we* (or *we-all*), *y'all* and *dem* occur frequently in Negro dialect in the Deep South (as anyone from that region knows), and most of the same forms occur sporadically in Negro dialect throughout the rest of the United States (as many teachers can testify). These forms, which are strikingly similar to those of the Caribbean Creole English which Labov asserts (in a footnote to the foregoing quote) that American Negro dialect is so unlike, demonstrate quite clearly that more than just phonological rules are involved in the difference between the total set of Negro-dialect and standard-English possessives.

21. Of course, inter-dialectal sound-spelling correspondences of this type are not going to give rise to successful word identifications when cognate word forms do not exist in the two kinds of English. For example, a Negro-dialect speaker who is able to read *bath* "correctly" (in terms of his own phonology) as /bæf/ may puzzle over *bathe*, which he ought to read "correctly" as /beyv/ if he can read *breathe* as /briyv/. But the problem is likely to be that the Negro-dialect speaker receives no confirmation of such a reading from his own vocabulary -- many varieties of Negro dialect having only verb phrases with /bæf/, e.g. *take a bath*, *give a bath*, as functional equivalents of the standard English transitive and intransitive verb *bathe*.

22. The usual Negro-dialect reflexes of /θ/ and /ð/ have been discussed in more detail in my "Foreign Language Teaching Methods in Quasi-Foreign Language Situations" (see note 15 above) and in Ralph Fasold, "Orthography in Reading Materials for Black English Speaking Children" [in the present volume, pages 68-91]. At one point, Fasold questions my description of a Negro dialect without /θ/ and /ð/ phonemes. Since Fasold makes no reference to a footnote (to the very paragraph that he takes issue with)

in which I point out that many Negro-dialect speakers do indeed have at least initial /θ/ and /ð/, it can only be that he thinks I am wrong in maintaining that any variety of Negro dialect lacks /θ/ and /ð/ phonemes. If so, then he must be unaware, not only of the usage of some younger children in the District of Columbia (the one I chose to describe, since it poses obvious pedagogical problems), but also of that of many adult Negro-dialect speakers along the South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida seaboard.

23. Starting with Rosenbaum (see note 19 above), a number of linguists have preoccupied themselves with the problem of whether the differences between Negro dialect and standard English are all in the "surface structure" (i.e. the phonology and, let us say for simplicity's sake, the transformations as well) or not -- as if the settling of this highly theoretical issue one way or the other would have profound implications for language teaching and for Negro self-respect. One of their assumptions seems to be that, if the differences between two grammars can be shown to be limited to the surface structure, then pedagogical concern over these differences would be unfounded. But although surface-structure differences are undoubtedly easier for one to cope with, this does not necessarily mean that the absence of differences from the "deep structure" (i.e. the grammatical categories and phrase-structure rules) of the grammars of two languages or dialects will in itself insure either mutual intelligibility or effortless language learning between them. Among other factors, the actual number of surface-structure differences between two languages or dialects can have an important effect on intelligibility and the ease of acquisition. For example, although there may be scarcely any deep-structure differences between Anglo-Saxon and modern English, the surface-structure differences between the two are extensive enough to render texts in the former virtually unintelligible to speakers of the latter without some very difficult language learning. But, then, it is possible that the linguistic terminology in which this issue is couched may be little more than a scientific veneer covering an essentially social concern. For, although the linguistic alternatives are never evaluated in political terms, public assertions that only surface-structure differences exist between Negro dialect and standard English are often made (and accepted) with all the conviction and prior commitment of public assertions of the Negro's rights in American society. Might there perchance be a subtle analogy working in the minds of these linguists

(and their audiences) between surface structure and deep structure on the one hand, and skin color and the "inner man" on the other? If so, then asserting publicly that American Negroes have the same linguistic deep structure as American whites may merely be a way of declaring one's acceptance of the Negro as an equal. But what if, in fact, Negro dialect does exhibit certain deep-structure differences from standard English, and even from white nonstandard speech? Does this mean that Negroes are intellectually, socially, and politically unequal to whites? Does it mean that linguists should ignore such differences, or attempt to explain them away? The tailoring of linguistic statements about dialect differences to fit current humanistic social rhetoric may indeed have the desired effect of gratifying middle-class Negro adults, but I doubt if it will ever contribute much toward solving the school language-learning problems of lower-class Negro children.

24. As is also the case with many (but not all) of its phonological features, Negro dialect shares many (but not all) such transformationally-derived grammatical differences from standard English with nonstandard white dialects -- particularly those spoken in the South. In fact, the See can he go construction even extends to Southern colloquial standard usage. Correspondences of this type are sometimes cited by dialect geographers and English-language specialists in an attempt to prove that there is no such thing as "Negro dialect" -- that the nonstandard speech of American Negroes is structurally identical to that of Southern whites. (I call this, perhaps uncharitably, the "Ain't nobody here but us white folks" theory.) Since I know of no community in even the deepest South in which the nonstandard speech of monodialectal Negroes is identical to that of monodialectal whites, and, indeed, since some features of Negro speech are conceivably of non-European origin, it may well be that such an assertion is but a more primitive version of the surface-structure-differences-only ploy mentioned earlier (see note 23 above). At any rate, the term "Negro dialect" is a sociolinguistic one, like "American English", and is meant to indicate the relationship between the social identity of a linguistic system's users and its structural characteristics. Nonstandard Negro dialect is "nonstandard" because it has structural features which deviate from standard usage, and it is "Negro" because it has particular configurations of structural features which are used exclusively (even though not universally) by Negroes. To deny the validity of the

concept merely because Negro speech turns out to share many structural features with white speech is like claiming that American English does not exist because the speech of Americans shares many structural features with that of Englishmen.

25. In most varieties of Negro dialect, *be* is also used for a future state or action, in which case it never becomes *bees*, e.g. *He be here all the time* or *He bees here all the time*, but only *He be here tomorrow*. In addition, *be* in the future sense takes *will* as an auxiliary or tag, instead of *do*, e.g. *Will he be here tomorrow?* as a question form of *He be here tomorrow*. The Negro-dialect speaker's "correction" of non-future *be* to *will be* represents a fusion of the forms of the non-future with the future *be* -- apparently based on an awareness that the latter can pass muster as standard English, while the former cannot.

26. The view of Negro dialect as faulty or disordered speech has been a common one among speech therapists and, to only a slightly lesser degree, among English teachers. Recently, in an interview reported in Herbert H. Denton's article "Negro Dialect: Should the Schools Fight it?" in *The Washington Post* (December 22, 1968), Dorothy L. Vaill, the head of the Speech Department of the District of Columbia Public Schools, objected to talking about Negro dialect as a well-formed language, saying "[Negroes] are American people speaking an American language." But, if American Negroes all speak an American language (which they do), then what is wrong with recognizing the existence of these Americans and their distinctive form of American language? Or does Miss Vaill mean that, because Negroes are Americans, they *ought* to speak an American language (=standard English) -- even if they often don't. Does this speech therapist think that, because Negro dialect is different from standard English, it is un-American? What about Navajo Indians, who are also Americans speaking an American language! And, although this speech therapist is white, the same view can be encountered in Negroes representing a wide spectrum of sociopolitical orientations. For example, the Negro audiologist Charles G. Hurst, Jr., in his *Psychological Correlates in Dialectolalia* (Howard University, Communication Sciences Research Center, 1965), has characterized Negro dialect as "defective speech...abnormal speech" (p. 1) and as "oral aberrations" involving "phonetic distortions, defective syntax, misarticulations, mispronunciations, limited or poor vocabulary, and faulty

phonology" (p. 2). I even once remember, in a Negro-nationalist bookstore in Harlem, being assured by a lady in an African dress that the cause of Negro dialect was a "lazy tongue".

27. The test is described briefly in Joan C. Baratz, "Teaching Reading in an Urban Negro School System" [in the present volume, pages 92-116], and in more detail in her article, "A Bi-Dialectal Task for Determining Language Proficiency in Economically Disadvantaged Negro Children", to appear in Child Development, Vol. 40, No. 3 (September, 1969).

28. See, for example, Paul M. Postal, Aspects of Phonological Theory (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

29. Although the techniques of literary-dialect orthography have found their greatest use in the representation of nonstandard dialects in literature, and thus have tended to be wanting in linguistic accuracy, there is no reason why the same techniques could not be used by a linguist to develop a linguistically sophisticated and pedagogically useful orthography for a nonstandard dialect or "quasi-foreign" language. In fact, I know of at least one case where this has already been done. In his "Writing Haitian Creole: Issues and Proposals for Orthography" (the Appendix to the unpublished Hudson Institute document HI-458-D, December 1, 1964), Paul C. Berry has devised a sociolinguistically sound literary-dialect orthography for Haitian Creole based on the orthographic conventions of standard French, the official and school language of Haiti.

30. Interestingly enough, some well-known literary creations of the classic period of Negro-dialect writing (1875-1925) turn out to be syntactically almost pure standard English, with most of the differences being in pronunciation (shown by dialect spellings) and vocabulary. This is especially true of Paul Laurence Dunbar's early dialect poetry -- a fact which is not surprising when one realizes that he was probably not a native speaker of the rural, lower-class Negro dialect he was attempting to represent, and when one stops to think how difficult it is to write good verse (which Dunbar's was) in even a familiar dialect.

31. This, incidentally, proved to be one of the more serious pitfalls in early literacy programs in Haiti. Rural peasants were taught to read their native French Creole

in an autonomous phonemic orthography in which, for example, the words for "there", "that", and "step" were written la, sa, and pa, because they are pronounced that way. But the inevitability of an association of Creole with standard French, so similar in vocabulary, was overlooked by the literacy specialists. Consequently, when he attempted to make the transition to literacy in French, the poor Haitian peasant was left unprepared for the fact that the same words, with the same meanings and pronunciations, were written là, ça, and pas respectively. Berry's Creole orthography, mentioned earlier (see note 29, above), was designed to correct this problem by making the Creole word spellings resemble more closely those of their French counterparts.

32. When I first began using standard-English word spellings for writing Negro dialect texts, I assumed that this was an entirely new technique. However, a subsequent search revealed that a number of other writers have hit upon the same idea independently, and used it for a wide range of purposes. In the early 1940's, a type of word spelling very close to standard English was used to set down the ex-slave narratives which had been collected by the Federal Writers' Project; see B.A. Botkin, ed., Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945). In the Spring of 1965, several teacher-parents connected with the Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM) wrote spontaneous and unprogrammed beginning readers in Negro dialect, using standard-English spellings for the words. Still more recently, Carl F. Burke, a prison chaplain, has produced two books of religious texts and verse in an approximation of Negro dialect grammar (though only slightly nonstandard) with standard-English word spellings in most places: God Is For Real, Man (New York: Association Press, 1966) and Treat Me Cool, Lord (New York: Association Press, 1968). Some of the passages in Chaplain Burke's books appear to be based on spoken or written expositions by Negroes, while others are obviously ex post facto creations by the white author. Unfortunately, in his attempts to produce his own Negro-dialect passages, Burke has achieved only mixed success. For example, he innocently uses punk in the strictly white sense of "hoodlum" -- apparently unaware that it means "homosexual" in Negro dialect. Probably the most ambitious application of the standard-English word-spelling technique to the representation of Negro dialect has been that of a young New Yorker who has written an entire novel in an approximation of Harlem teenage speech. This is Shane Stevens, Go Down Dead (New York:

William Morrow & Co., 1966). Although Stevens' dialect grammar is not always accurate (e.g. *dont going get*..., for *aint going get*... -- perhaps a misapplication of the perception that *got* takes the auxiliary *do* in that variety of Negro dialect), it is still close enough to be artistically effective.

33. It should be pointed out that not every unit referred to in this discussion as a "prefix" will necessarily be a true prefix in standard-English grammatical or lexical terms (cf. the *me-* in *memorial*). From a historical point of view, these units are simply word-initial pretonic syllables which somehow became detached in the process of language transmission. Since re-standardization of the resultant Negro-dialect base forms requires that the appropriate syllables be "prefixed" to them, however, these syllables come to function morphologically like prefixes, and the base forms like stems.

34. The spelling of the prefix *ex-* makes it the one item which cannot be handled routinely by this technique. The problem is caused by the letter *x* in the prefix, which represents not only the final /k/ or /g/ of the phonological prefix (that is, the part which may be absent in Negro dialect), but also the /s/ (before consonants) or the /z/ (before vowels) which normally remains a part of the Negro dialect base form, e.g. /spek/ for *expect*, /zækli/ for *exactly*. In traditional literary Negro dialect, the remaining /s/ and /z/ of a former *ex-* were usually indicated by *'s* and *'z*, e.g. *'spec'*, *'zackly*. Yet, this practice is hardly a desirable one for beginning reading texts, since it is not in keeping with the idea of avoiding letter alternations in standard-English spellings. For the present, I feel that the least complicated solution to the problem created by *ex-* is simply not to make unnecessary use of words with it in the initial stage of the reading materials. At a later stage, such words could be introduced in their full forms, reinforced by oral drills. Fortunately, the one high-frequency Negro-dialect word which it would be difficult to avoid using in even very early texts, i.e. /sep/ for *except*, can be handled quite easily by the apostrophe technique, i.e. *'cept*, since the /s/ of the *ex-* has coalesced with the initial /s/ (spelled *c*) in the base form.

35. For a general discussion of Negro speech in the District of Columbia, including the relationship of the nonstandard dialect of Negro children to that of adults, see William A.

Stewart "Urban Negro Speech: Sociolinguistic Factors Affecting English Teaching" (cited in note 15 above).

36. In certain extremely nonstandard varieties of Negro dialect in the coastal areas mentioned, pronoun forms may even be undifferentiated for sex, so that sequences like *He a nice girl* (or *Him a nice girl*) and *Here come he boyfriend* (or *Here come him boyfriend*) are quite normal.

37. The -*s* in the coastal South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida variants *gots* and *does* for *got* and auxiliary *do* is not a functional suffix, but rather an integral part of the verb base.

38. In addition to regional variation in a few grammatical details, there is a certain amount of variation in Negro-dialect pronunciation. A small part of this variation may be caused by differences in the basic phonology (i.e. the inventory of phonemes, their articulation and co-occurrence rules) of regional forms of Negro dialect, but the greater part of this type of variation is caused by differences in lexico-phonology (i.e. the phonemic structure of specific words). For example, the stressed vowel in the word usually spelled *little* may be /i/ in some regions, but /iy/ in others. Although regional variation in Negro-dialect lexico-phonology should not be severe enough to require extensive modification of standard-English word spellings in Negro-dialect reading materials, there may be a few cases in which dialect pronunciations will be too deviant for the standard-English spelling, e.g. /čimbli/ for *chimney* and /swimp/ for *shrimp*. Although there will be a temptation to devise dialect-oriented spellings for such cases, e.g. *chimbley* and *swimp*, the fact that the standard-English spellings (and pronunciations) would have to be taught eventually suggests that it might be better to introduce them to the beginning reader in their standard-English spelling after the standard-English pronunciation has been taught orally. This procedure would eliminate a potential source of confusion for the young reader by avoiding the accumulation in the program of words with two spellings, one nonstandard and one standard.

39. In the section entitled "An Experimental Investigation of the Use of Dialect vs. Standard English as a Language of Instruction" in the recent report on United States Office of Economic Opportunity Project No. IED 66-1-12, Carolyn Stern and Evan Keislar describe their attempt to assess the reaction of lower-class Negro Head Start children in

the Los Angeles area to the use of standard English and what the experimenters considered to be nonstandard Negro dialect in a lesson context. The lesson plan consisted of only one text, written in standard English, with instructions to a "professional Negro actress" to read the lesson aloud once in standard English and once in Negro dialect. Tape recordings of these readings were then played to the subjects, who were grouped *à la* standard experimental procedure. The posttests were also treated in this way. When the results were assessed, the experimenters were surprised to find that their Negro subjects learned significantly more about the content of the experimental lesson when it was presented in standard English than when it was presented in the nonstandard version. And, although they did see that the match between the nonstandard stimulus in their experiment and the actual Negro dialect of their subjects was undetermined, they nevertheless concluded that "there seems to be little support for an increasingly popular notion that young Negroes would suffer less of a handicap in their early school years if they were initially taught in a dialect with which they are familiar. Instead, evidence has been presented to show that instruction employing standard English produced superior learning under some circumstances." On request, Stern was kind enough to furnish me with the tapes used in that experiment, and they reveal that the experimenters' concern about the match between the nonstandard stimulus and the language of the subjects was more than justified. For, the nonstandard stimulus turned out to be little more than the kind of Negro stage dialect I have already described -- a kind of language which is grammatically much closer to standard English than to the nonstandard dialect which I have heard lower-class Negro children speak in Los Angeles. Now, this should not be taken as a criticism of the Negro actress; she merely did the job she was trained, and hired, to do. Indeed, if anyone thinks that it is even possible to read a standard-English text aloud as authentic Negro dialect, just let them try to read "Shirley and the Valentine Card" aloud as grammatical standard English -- bearing in mind all the while that, since standard-English speech patterns are the more formally-defined ones, they ought to be the easiest to produce in this way. My point is that, when the experimental subjects responded to this Negro stage dialect as if it were merely an odd type of standard English (which it was), their reaction was taken as clear-cut evidence that they found standard English more meaningful than their own dialect. And, such is the aversion of liberal educators to the possibility that distinctive and viable Negro cultural patterns might exist, and of traditionalist educators to the possibility that new pedagogical techniques and skills might be in order, that this conclusion has been enthusiastically received in many quarters as proof positive that Negro dialect has no place in education, and may not even exist at all.

40. I understand that, in some experimental classes for lower-class Negro children, attempts have been made to relate the content of the curriculum to the language of these children by giving them the Uncle Remus stories to read. As long as this sort of nonsense continues, it will be safest to ascribe any reported failure in the use of Negro dialect in the classroom to the professional incompetence of the would-be experimenters, rather than to the linguistic incompetence of the subjects.